A MARVEL SUPER SPECIAL™ No. 31

THE LAST STARFIGHTER™

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THE OFFICIAL COMICS ADAPTATION OF THE SPECTACULAR NEW FILM!

31
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STAN LEE PRESENTS
A MARVEL SUPER SPECIAL MAGAZINE
THE OFFICIAL COMICS ADAPTATION OF

A UNIVERSAL/LORIMAR Production

THE LAST STARFIGHTER™

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Based on the film starring
LANCE GUEST * DAN O'HERLIHY
Co-starring **CATHERINE MARY STEWART**
and **ROBERT PRESTON** as Centauri

Written by **JONATHAN BETUEL**
Director of Photography **KING BAGGOT**
Production Designer **RON COBB**
Music by **CRAIG SAFAN**
Produced by **GARY ADELSON** and **EDWARD O. DENAULT**
Special Effects by **DIGITAL PRODUCTIONS**
Directed by **NICK CASTLE**

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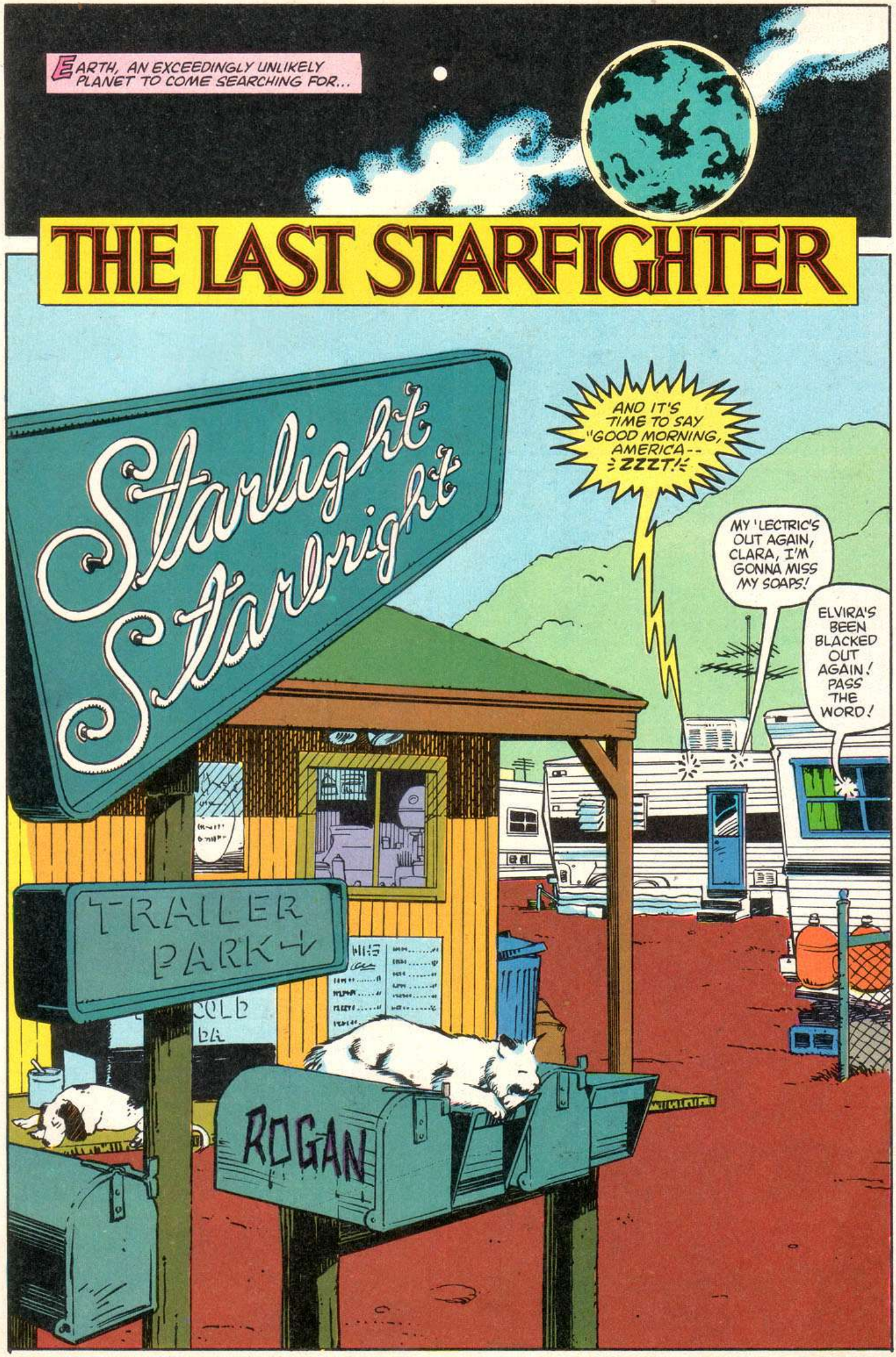
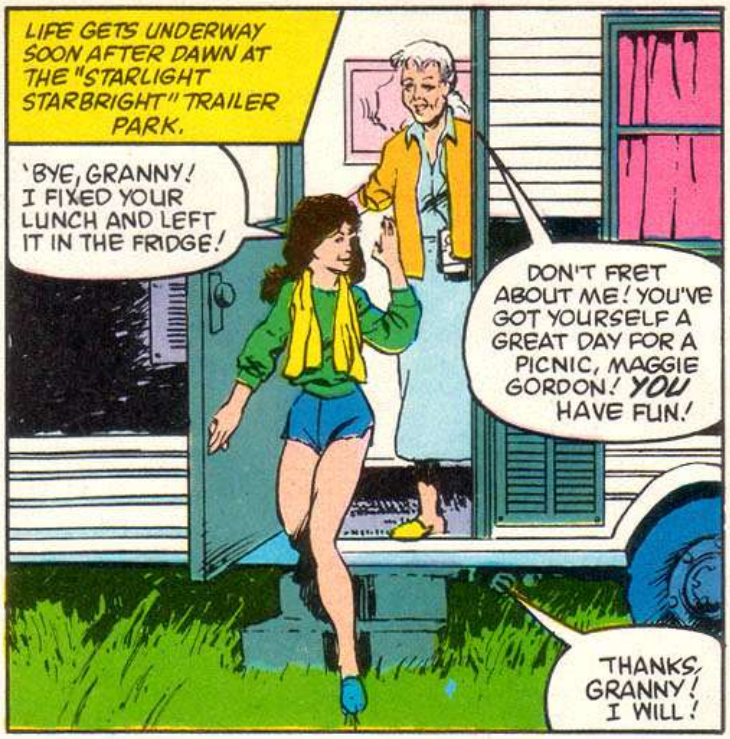
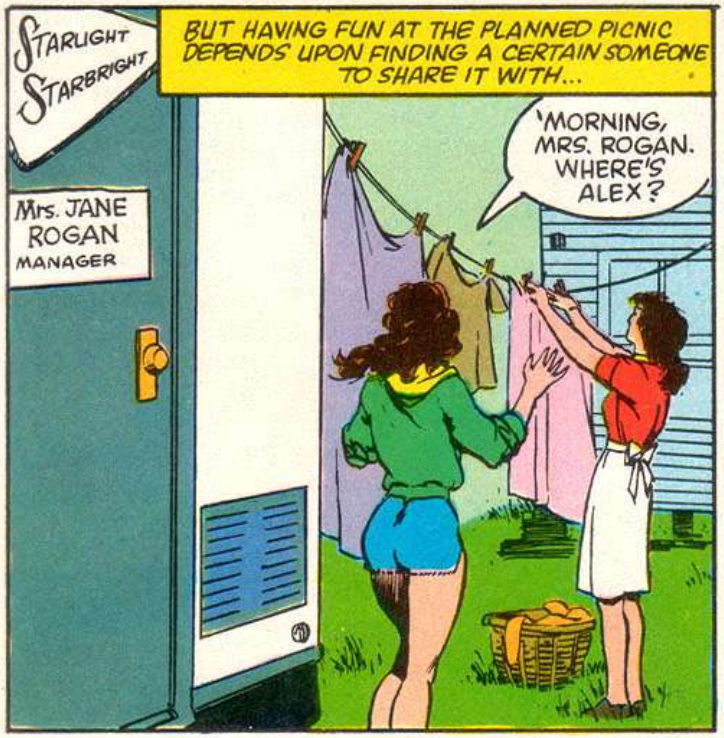
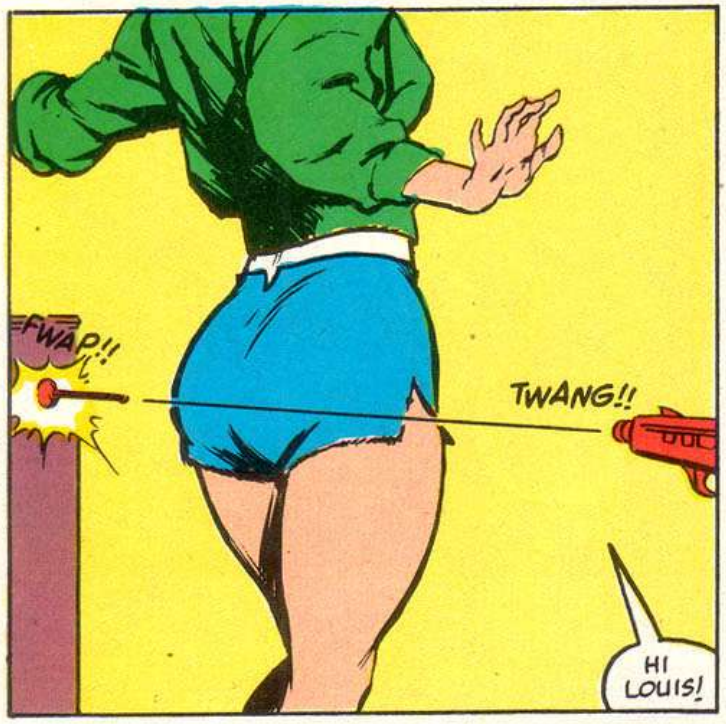
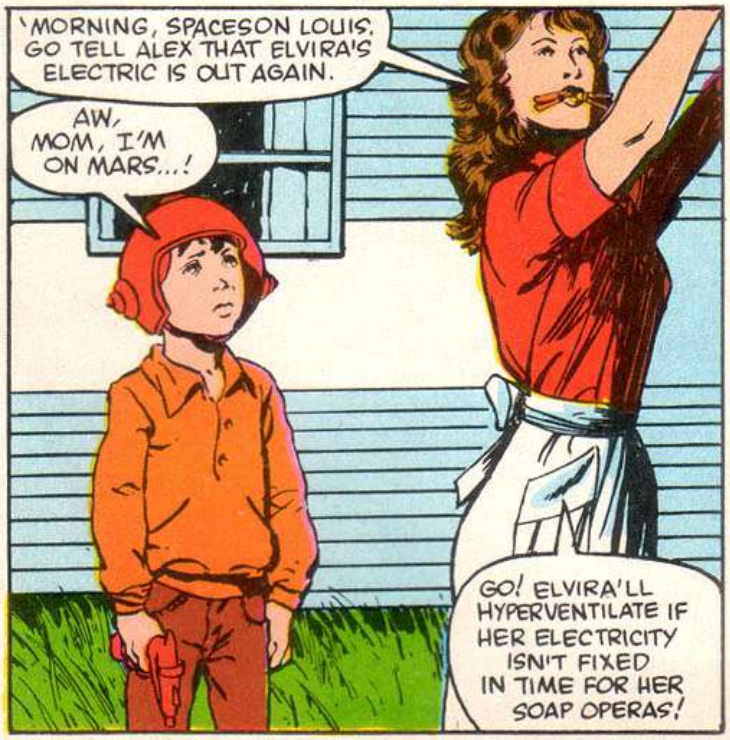

EARTH, AN EXCEEDINGLY UNLIKELY PLANET TO COME SEARCHING FOR...
THE LAST STARFIGHTER
Starlight Starbright
AND IT'S TIME TO SAY "GOOD MORNING, AMERICA-- ZZZT!"
MY 'LECTRIC'S OUT AGAIN, CLARA, I'M GONNA MISS MY SOAPS!
ELVIRA'S BEEN BLACKED OUT AGAIN! PASS THE WORD!
TRAILER PARK
ROGAN

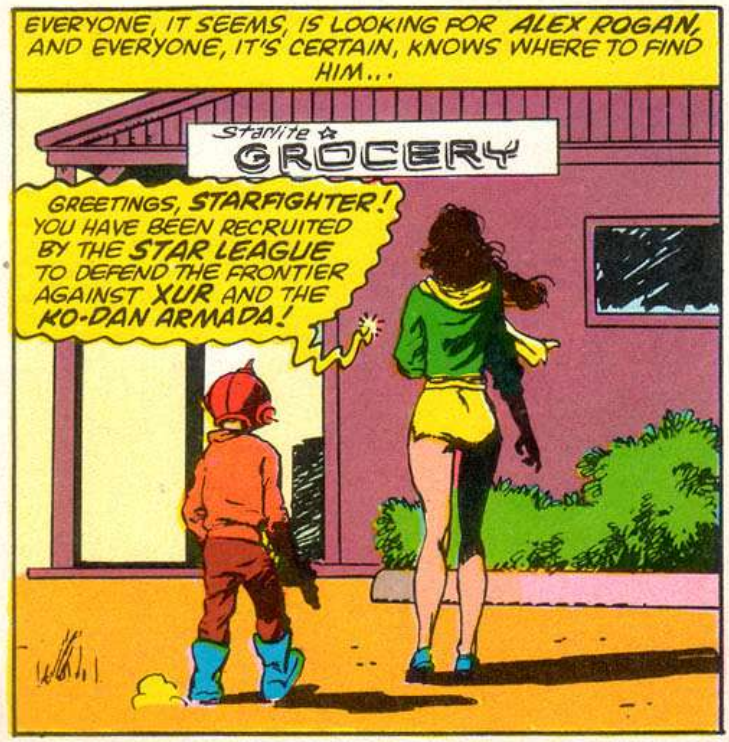

LIFE GETS UNDERWAY SOON AFTER DAWN AT THE "STARLIGHT STARBRIGHT" TRAILER PARK.
'BYE, GRANNY! I FIXED YOUR LUNCH AND LEFT IT IN THE FRIDGE!
DON'T FRET ABOUT ME! YOU'VE GOT YOURSELF A GREAT DAY FOR A PICNIC, MAGGIE GORDON! YOU HAVE FUN!
THANKS, GRANNY! I WILL!

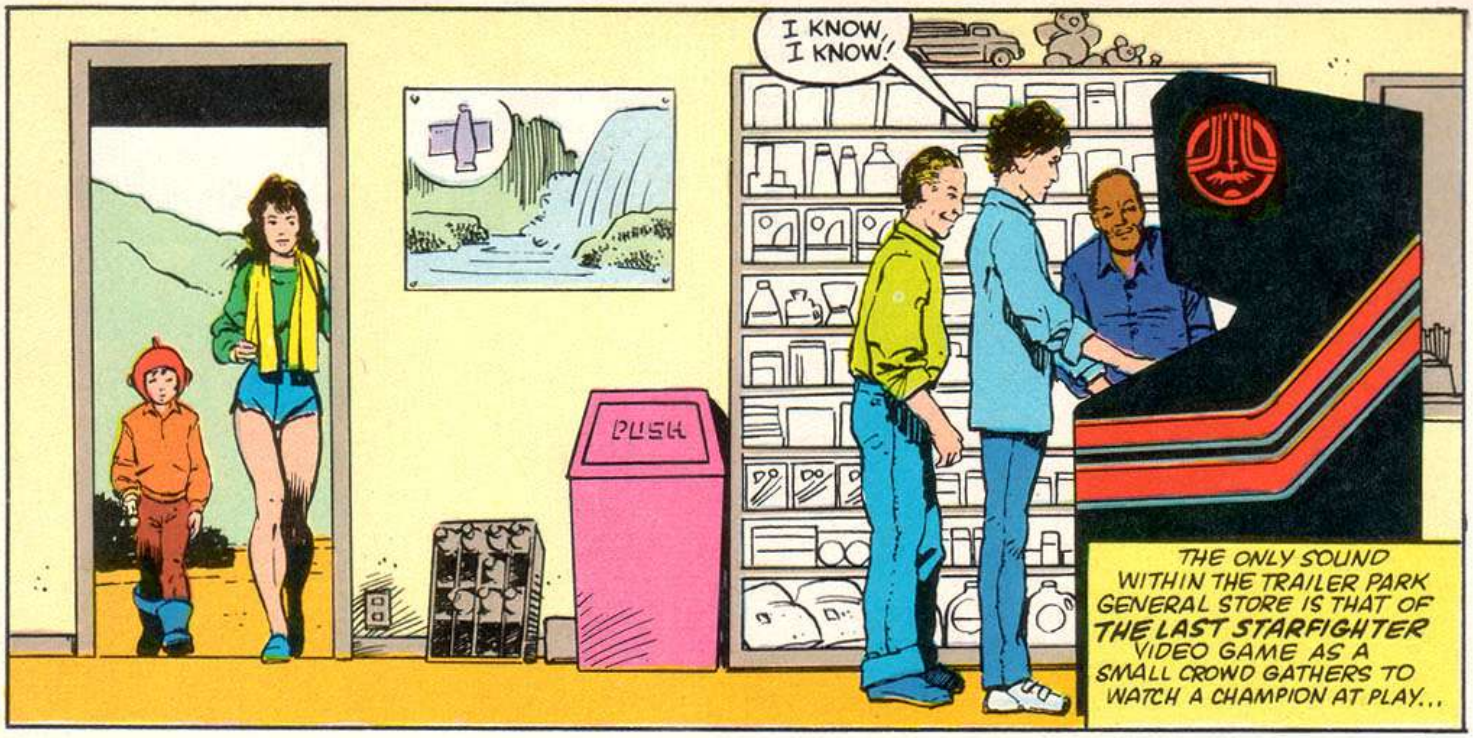

STARLIGHT STARBRIGHT
BUT HAVING FUN AT THE PLANNED PICNIC DEPENDS UPON FINDING A CERTAIN SOMEONE TO SHARE IT WITH...
MRS. JANE ROGAN MANAGER
'MORNING, MRS. ROGAN. WHERE'S ALEX?

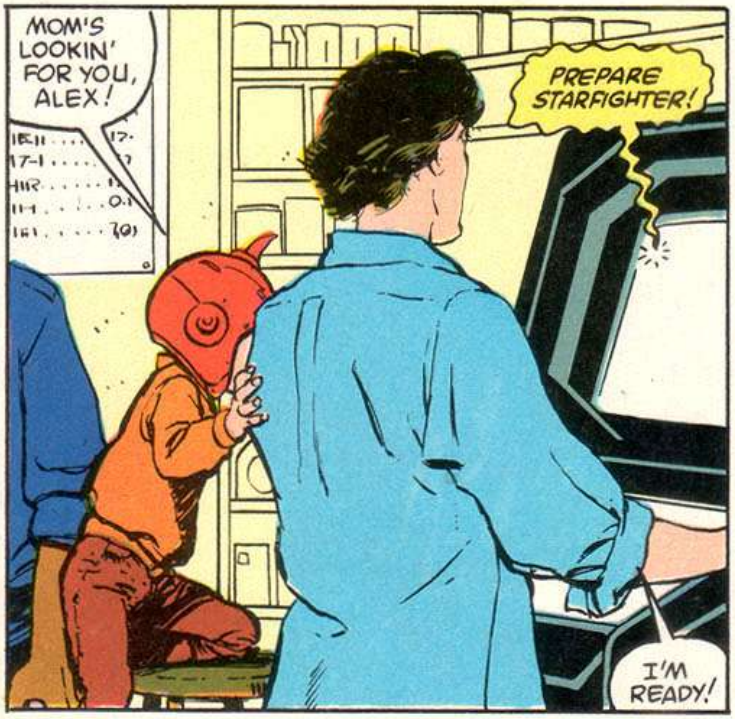
WHERE ELSE?
RIGHT! THANKS!

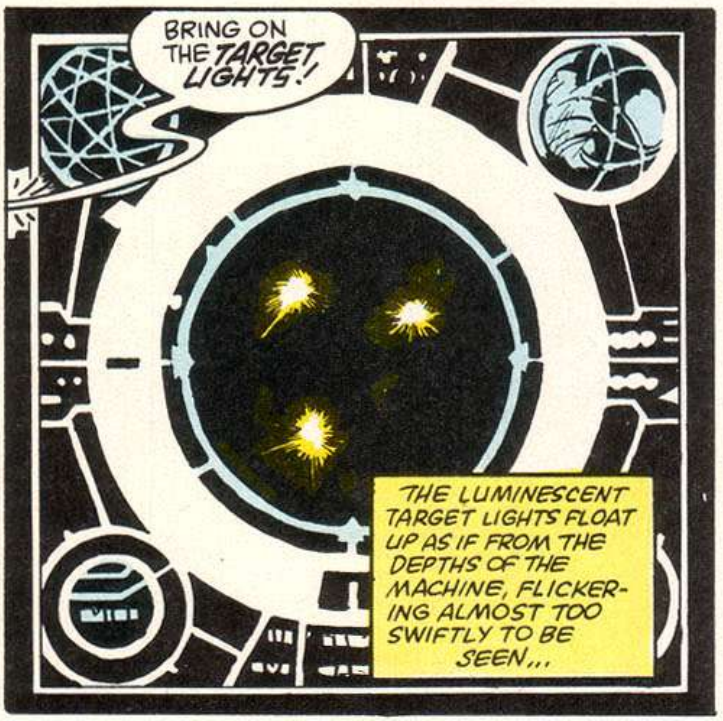

FWAP!!
TWANG!!
HI LOUIS!


'MORNING, SPACESON LOUIS. GO TELL ALEX THAT ELVIRA'S ELECTRIC IS OUT AGAIN.
AW, MOM, I'M ON MARS...!
GO! ELVIRA'LL HYPERVENTILATE IF HER ELECTRICITY ISN'T FIXED IN TIME FOR HER SOAP OPERAS!


EVERYONE, IT SEEMS, IS LOOKING FOR ALEX ROGAN, AND EVERYONE, IT'S CERTAIN, KNOWS WHERE TO FIND HIM...
Starlite ☆ GROCERY
GREETINGS, STARFIGHTER! YOU HAVE BEEN RECRUITED BY THE STAR LEAGUE TO DEFEND THE FRONTIER AGAINST XUR AND THE KO-DAN ARMADA!

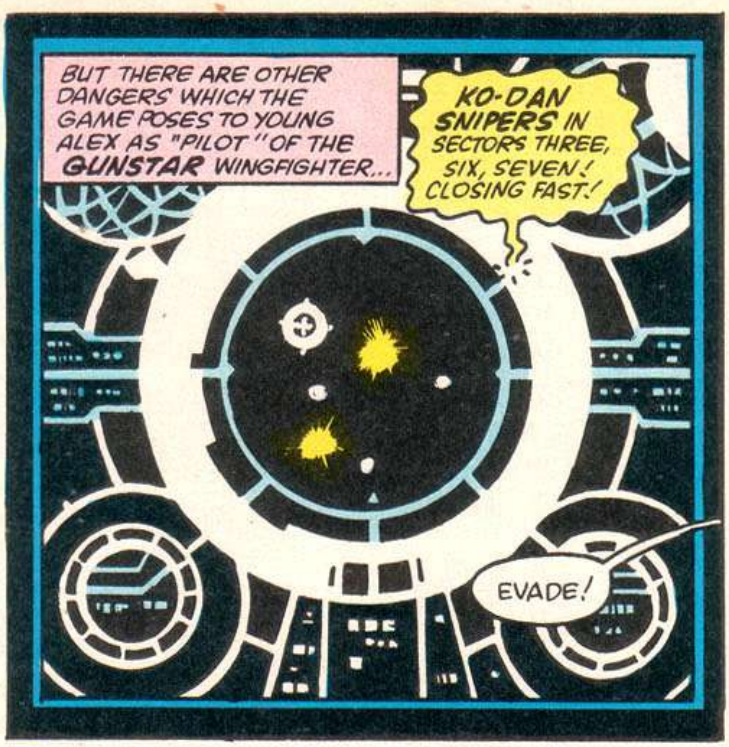

I KNOW, I KNOW!
PUSH
THE ONLY SOUND WITHIN THE TRAILER PARK GENERAL STORE IS THAT OF THE LAST STARFIGHTER VIDEO GAME AS A SMALL CROWD GATHERS TO WATCH A CHAMPION AT PLAY...


MOM'S LOOKIN' FOR YOU, ALEX!
PREPARE STARFIGHTER!
I'M READY!

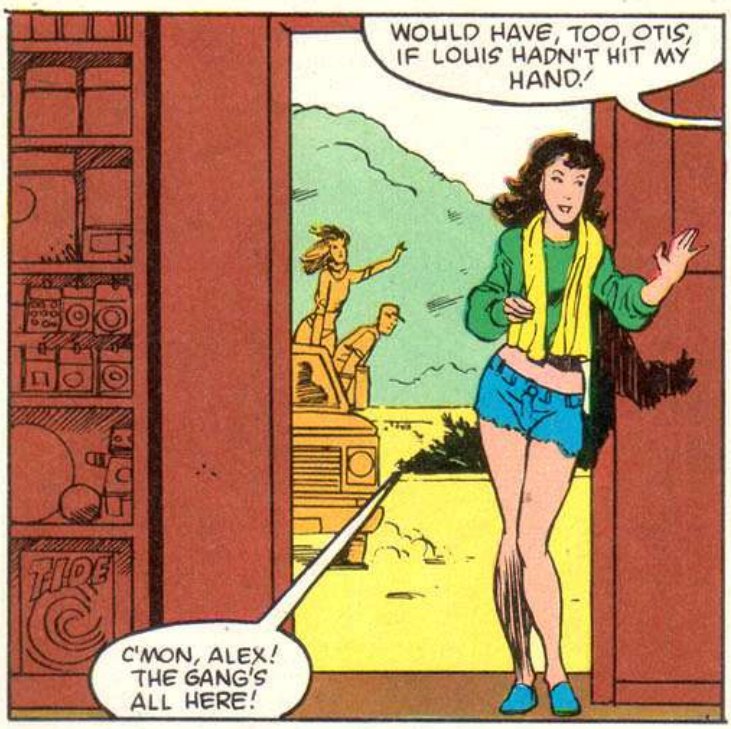

BRING ON THE TARGET LIGHTS!
THE LUMINESCENT TARGET LIGHTS FLOAT UP AS IF FROM THE DEPTHS OF THE MACHINE, FLICKERING ALMOST TOO SWIFTLY TO BE SEEN...

... BUT ALEX ROGAN SEES THEM--AND REACTS!
ATTAWAY, ALEX! GET 'EM! GET 'EM!
VREET VREET VREET
LOUIS! MOVE YOUR HEAD, WILL YOU?

IT DOESN'T SEEM TO MATTER WHETHER ANYONE BLOCKS ALEX'S VIEW OR NOT...
SHREEOW
... FOR EACH AND EVERY TARGET LIGHT MEETS EXTINCTION JUST THE SAME.

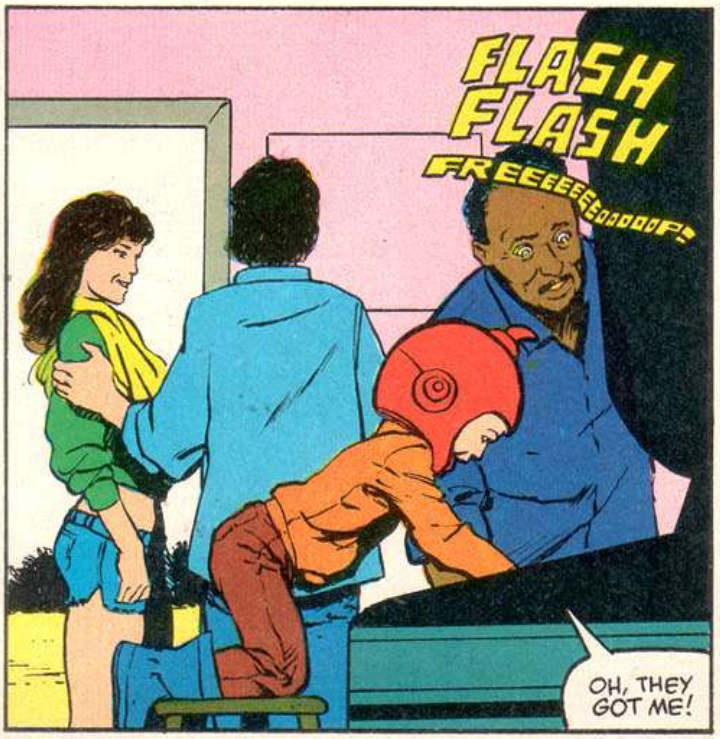

BUT THERE ARE OTHER DANGERS WHICH THE GAME POSES TO YOUNG ALEX AS "PILOT" OF THE GUNSTAR WINGFIGHTER...
KO-DAN SNIPERS IN SECTORS THREE, SIX, SEVEN! CLOSING FAST!
EVADE!

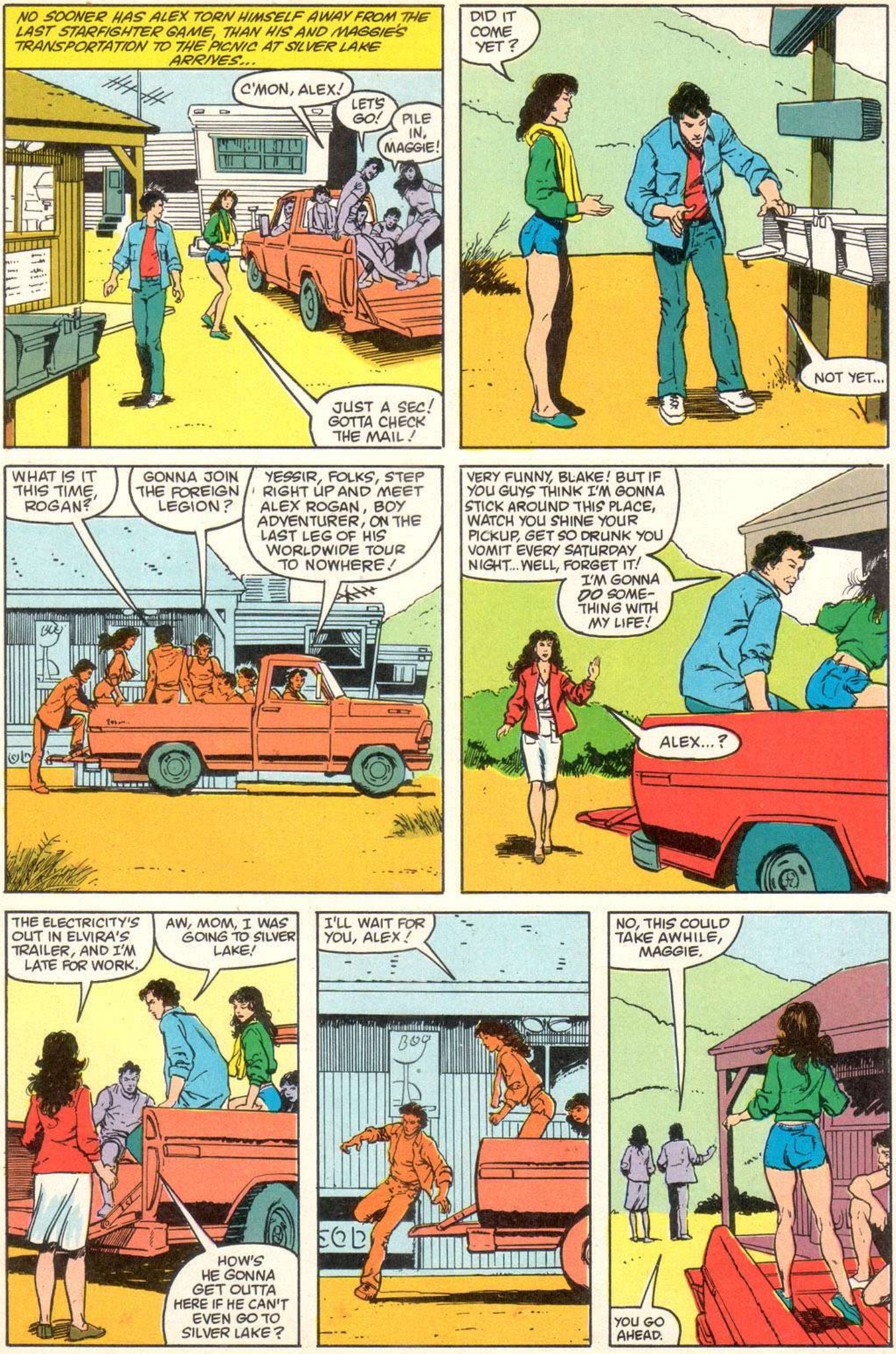
WOW! YOU GOT 'EM!
HEARD YOU ALMOST HIT 800,000 POINTS LAST NIGHT, ALEX!
SSHREEEE!

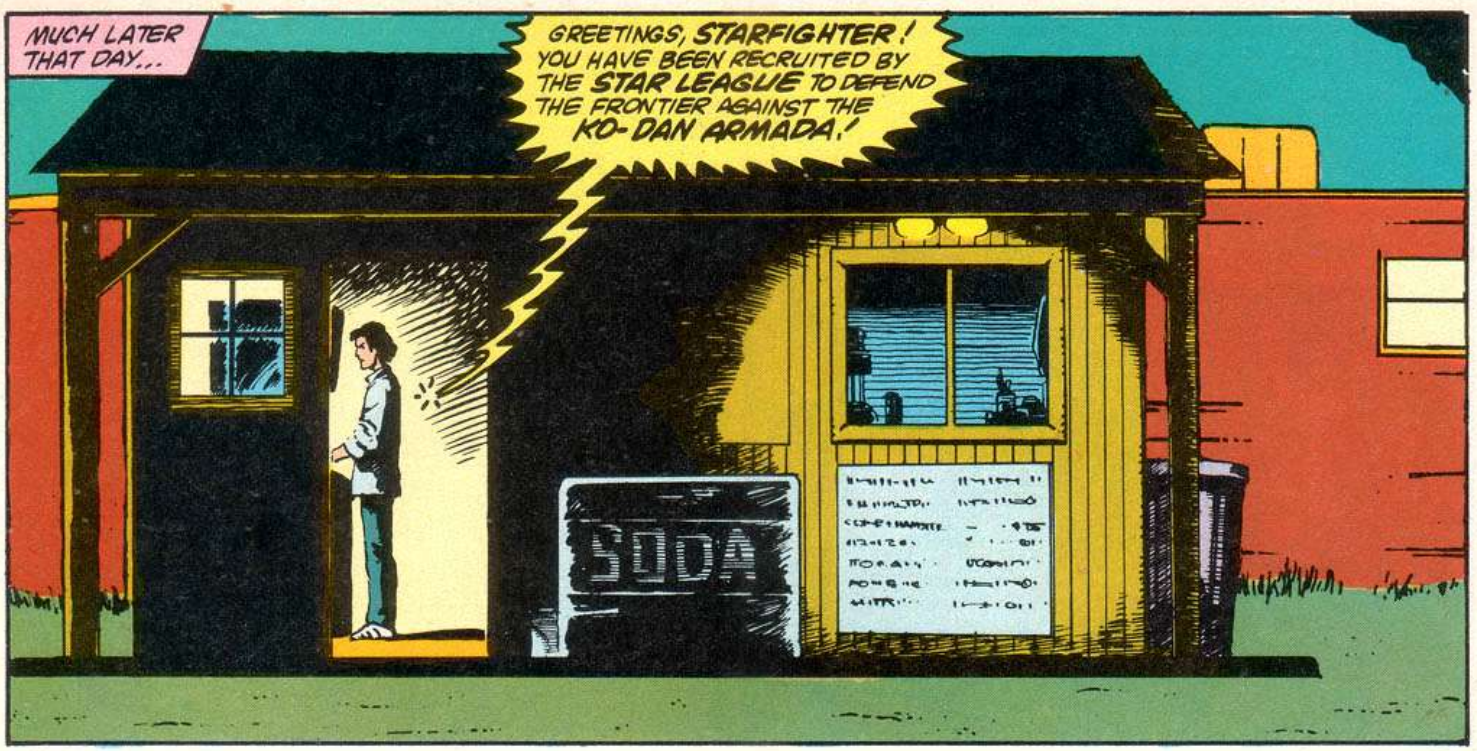

WOULD HAVE, TOO, OTIS, IF LOUIS HADN'T HIT MY HAND!
C'MON, ALEX! THE GANG'S ALL HERE!

HERE? OH! SILVER LAKE! THE PICNIC! RIGHT!
STARFIGHTER ALEX ROGAN REQUESTING PERMISSION TO TURN OVER THE GUNSTAR CONTROLS TO LITTLE BROTHER LOUIS, SIR?!

OH, BOY!
OKAY, YOU ALIENS! YOU'RE DEAD! 'CAUSE IT'S ME, LOUIS ROGAN, FLYIN' THE GUNSTAR NOW!


FLASH FLASH
FREEEEEEEEOOOOOF!
OH, THEY GOT ME!


NO SOONER HAS ALEX TORN HIMSELF AWAY FROM THE LAST STARFIGHTER GAME, THAN HIS AND MAGGIE'S TRANSPORTATION TO THE PICNIC AT SILVER LAKE ARRIVES...
C'MON, ALEX!
LET'S GO!
PILE IN, MAGGIE!
JUST A SEC! GOTTA CHECK THE MAIL!
DID IT COME YET?
NOT YET...
WHAT IS IT THIS TIME, ROGAN?
GONNA JOIN THE FOREIGN LEGION?
YESSIR, FOLKS, STEP RIGHT UP AND MEET ALEX ROGAN, BOY ADVENTURER, ON THE LAST LEG OF HIS WORLDWIDE TOUR TO NOWHERE!
VERY FUNNY, BLAKE! BUT IF YOU GUYS THINK I'M GONNA STICK AROUND THIS PLACE, WATCH YOU SHINE YOUR PICKUP, GET SO DRUNK YOU VOMIT EVERY SATURDAY NIGHT... WELL, FORGET IT!
I'M GONNA DO SOMETHING WITH MY LIFE!
ALEX...?
THE ELECTRICITY'S OUT IN ELVIRA'S TRAILER, AND I'M LATE FOR WORK.
AW, MOM, I WAS GOING TO SILVER LAKE!
HOW'S HE GONNA GET OUTTA HERE IF HE CAN'T EVEN GO TO SILVER LAKE?
I'LL WAIT FOR YOU, ALEX!
NO, THIS COULD TAKE AWHILE, MAGGIE.
YOU GO AHEAD.

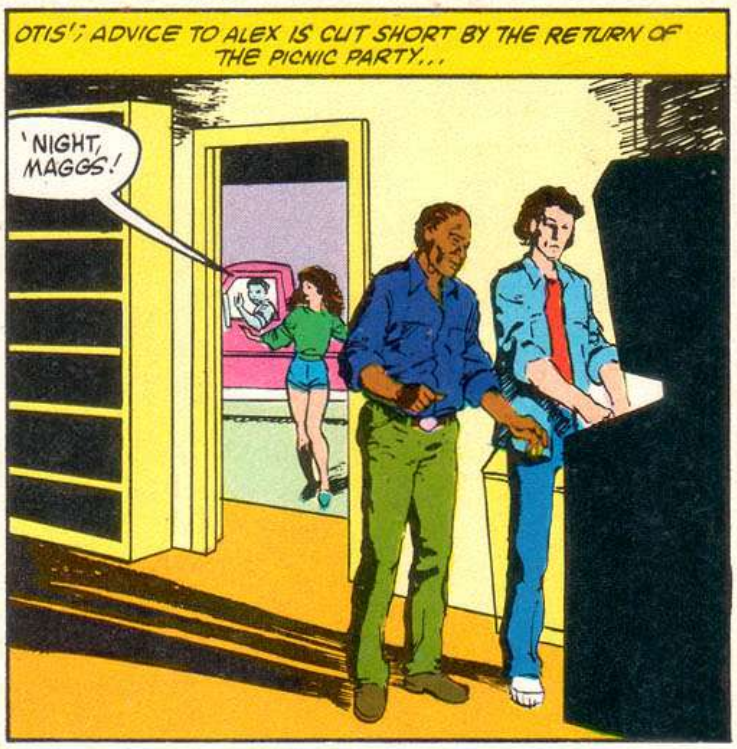

MUCH LATER THAT DAY...
GREETINGS, STARFIGHTER! YOU HAVE BEEN RECRUITED BY THE STAR LEAGUE TO DEFEND THE FRONTIER AGAINST THE KO-DAN ARMADA!
SODA

PREPARE FOR TARGET LIGHT PRACTICE, STAR-FIGHTER!
YEAH, YEAH... I'M READY!

WHERE'S YOUR MAGGIE, ALEX?
VREET VREET VREET
GOOD QUESTION. OUT HAVING A GOOD TIME, I GUESS.

OH. AND YOU NEVER HAVE A "GOOD TIME," THAT IT?
SURE, I LOVE FIXING ELECTRIC, CHECKING PLUMBING, PLUNGING TOILETS! GOSH, OTIS, I DON'T EVEN GET A CHANCE FOR A GOOD TIME AROUND HERE!

THINGS CHANGE... ALWAYS DO. YOU'LL GET YOUR CHANCE. IMPORTANT THING IS...
... WHEN IT COMES, YOU GOTTA GRAB IT WITH BOTH HANDS-- AND HOLD ON TIGHT!


OTIS'; ADVICE TO ALEX IS CUT SHORT BY THE RETURN OF THE PICNIC PARTY...
'NIGHT, MAGGS!

AMMO PACKS LOW! LIFE-SUPPORT FUNCTIONING! PHOTON-BOLTS LOW!
I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO MEET ME AT THE LAKE. WHAT HAPPENED?

THE SAME THING THAT ALWAYS HAPPENS. I COULDN'T GET AWAY. WHERE'S EVERYONE ELSE?
THEY WENT TO A MOVIE.
AND JACK BLAKE JUST HAPPENED TO BE DRIVING YOUR WAY?

HE SAID IT WAS ON HIS WAY HOME. LOOK OUT!
AMMO ON RESERVE! LIFE-SUPPORT ON EMERGENCY! PHOTON BOLTS AT PEAK!
BLAKE HAPPENS TO LIVE OVER ON THE OTHER SIDE OF TOWN!

ALEX, I WANTED TO GET BACK TO YOU, OKAY?
WOW! NINE HUNDRED THOUSAND...!
VREET VREET VREEOW
YOU'RE GONNA BUST THE RECORD!

LISTEN UP, EVERYBODY! ALEX IS GOIN' FOR THE RECORD!!!

ALEX'S EXCITEMENT IS CONTAGIOUS, AND IT ISN'T LONG BEFORE A CROWD GATHERS TO WATCH HIM SHOOT FOR HIS HIGHEST SCORE...

VREET VREET VREEOW

WOW! YOU NEVER GOT THIS FAR, ALEX! LOOK OUT! THE COMMAND SHIP!

RUTHLESSLY, RELENTLESSLY, THE VIDEO GAME HURLS ONE ALIEN ENEMY AFTER ANOTHER AT THE YOUNG STARFIGHTER.

BUT DEFTLY, DARINGLY, HE MEETS EVERY MANEUVER, COUNTERS EVERY ATTACK...

... AND, IN THE END, CLAIMS VICTORY!

RECORD-BREAKER! STARFIGHTER SUPREME!

YOU DID IT, ALEX! YOU BEAT THE MACHINE!

LATER...

I GUESS IT'S FINALLY HIT ME, ALEX. YOU REALLY ARE PLANNING TO GO AWAY, AREN'T YOU?

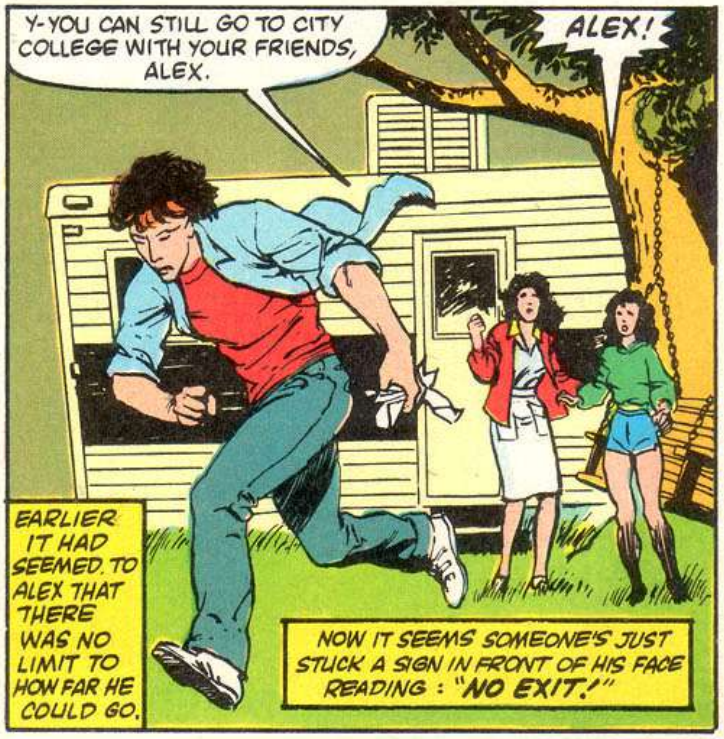
WE WENT ALL THROUGH THIS, REMEMBER? I GO TO COLLEGE, FIND A PLACE AND COME BACK FOR YOU.
BUT WHAT ABOUT GRANNY? WHO'LL TAKE CARE OF...?

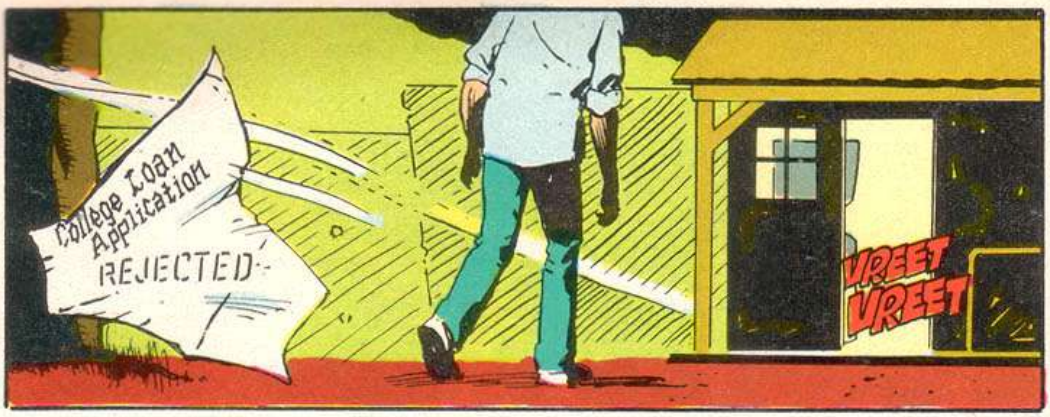
YOUR GRANDMOTHER'S A BIG GIRL, MAGGIE! SHE CAN TAKE CARE OF HERSELF! THE TRUTH IS, YOU'RE SCARED OF LEAVING THIS TRAILER PARK!
I AM NOT SCARED!

HEY, WHY ARE WE FIGHTING? WHATEVER HAPPENS, IT'S YOU AND ME FOREVER, RIGHT?
OH, I LOVE YOU SO MUCH, ALEX!

JUST THEN, ALEX'S MOTHER RETURNS HOME FROM WORK WITH SOME DISAPPOINTING NEWS...
ALEX, I PICKED UP THE MAIL TODAY...
DID IT COME, MOM? MY LETTER, DID IT COME?

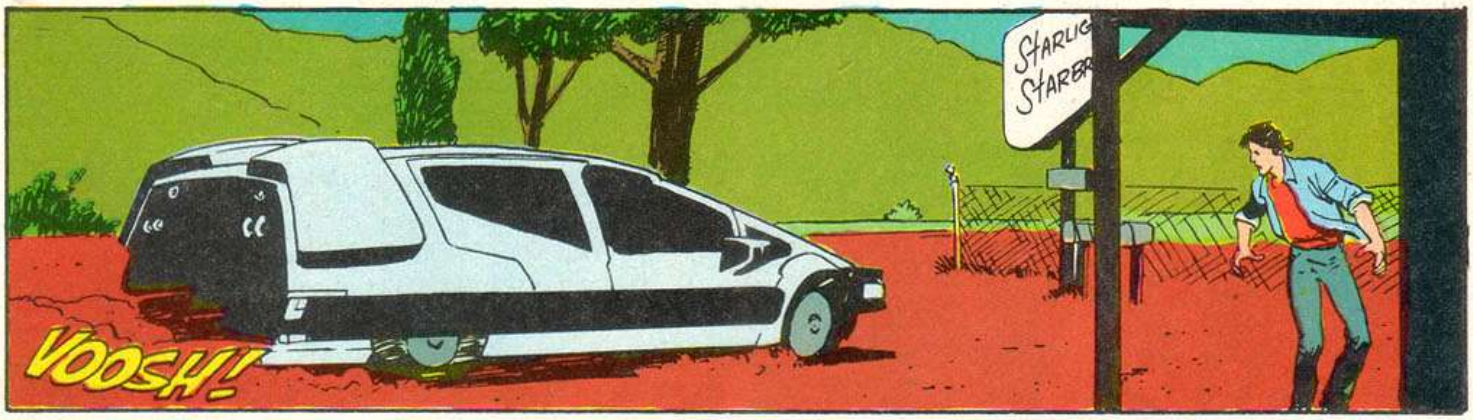
...YES, ALEX, IT CAME. I OPENED IT. ABOUT YOUR COLLEGE LOAN...


Y-YOU CAN STILL GO TO CITY COLLEGE WITH YOUR FRIENDS, ALEX.
ALEX!
EARLIER IT HAD SEEMED TO ALEX THAT THERE WAS NO LIMIT TO HOW FAR HE COULD GO.
NOW IT SEEMS SOMEONE'S JUST STUCK A SIGN IN FRONT OF HIS FACE READING : "NO EXIT!"


College Loan Application
REJECTED
VREET VREET

H-HUH?
VREEEOOT

OTIS CLOSED THE GENERAL STORE LONG AGO, BUT THE DOOR'S OPEN--
--AND THE LAST STARFIGHTER GAME IS PLAYING ALL BY ITSELF!

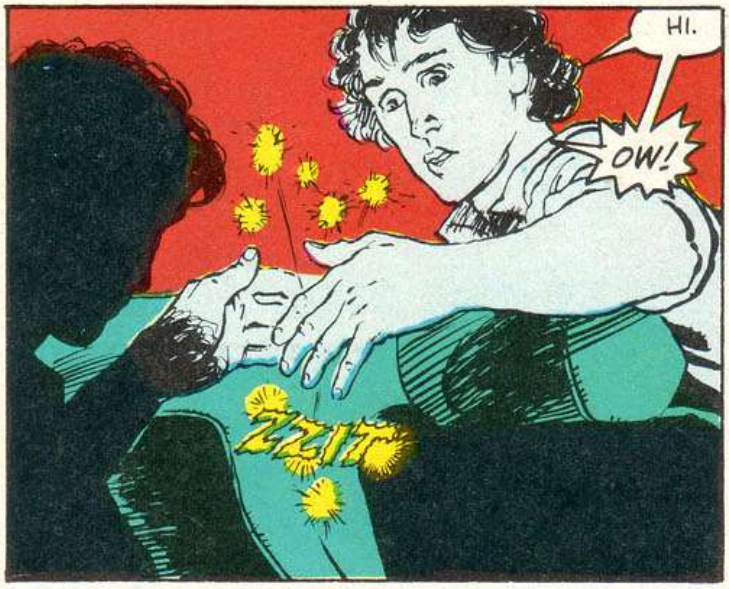

VOOSH!

EXCUSE ME, SON, BUT CAN YOU TELL ME THE NAME OF THE PERSON WHO BROKE THE RECORD ON THAT GAME OVER THERE--
--AND WHERE I MIGHT FIND HIM?
THE RECORD...? WHY, YOU'RE LOOKING AT HIM!
ME! ALEX ROGAN!
B-BUT...WHO ARE YOU?

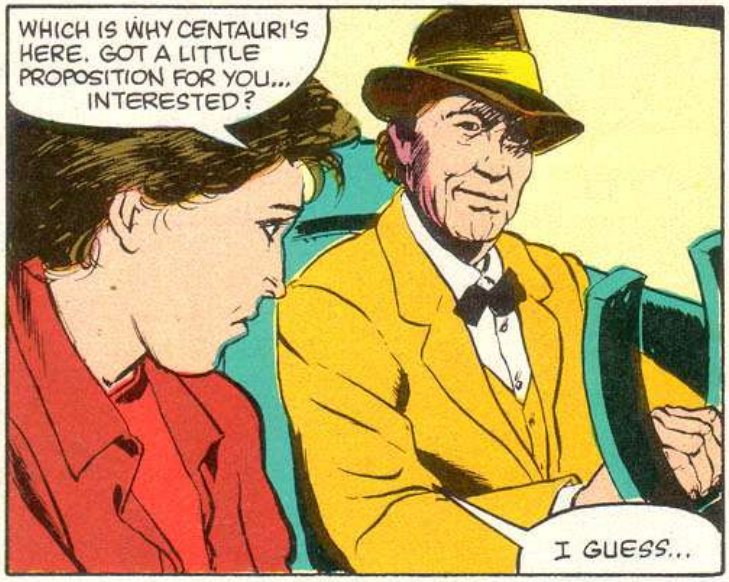
CENTAURI'S THE NAME. I INVENTED "STARFIGHTERS"!
WHICH IS THE REASON I'M HERE.

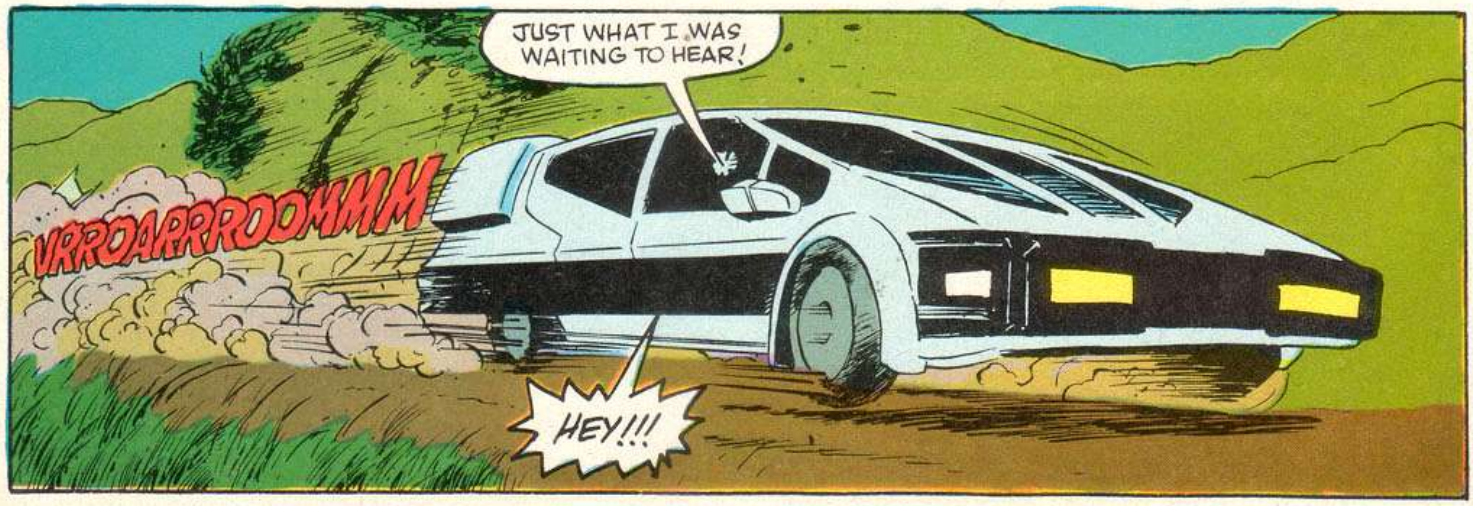
IT IS?
IT IS. WE MUST TALK, ON A MATTER OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE. STEP INTO MY OFFICE.
WHAT? YOU HESITATE? DO YOU THINK ME SOME THREADBARE CHARLATAN, BOY? I AM CENTAURI, AND YOU MAY--YOU MUST--TRUST ME IMPLICITLY!

FOR SOME INEXPLICABLE REASON ALEX FINDS HIMSELF OBEYING THE STRANGE STRANGER, AND THE INTERIOR OF THE VEHICLE YIELDS YET ANOTHER SURPRISE...
OH, YES, SHAKE HANDS WITH MY ASSISTANT... BETA.

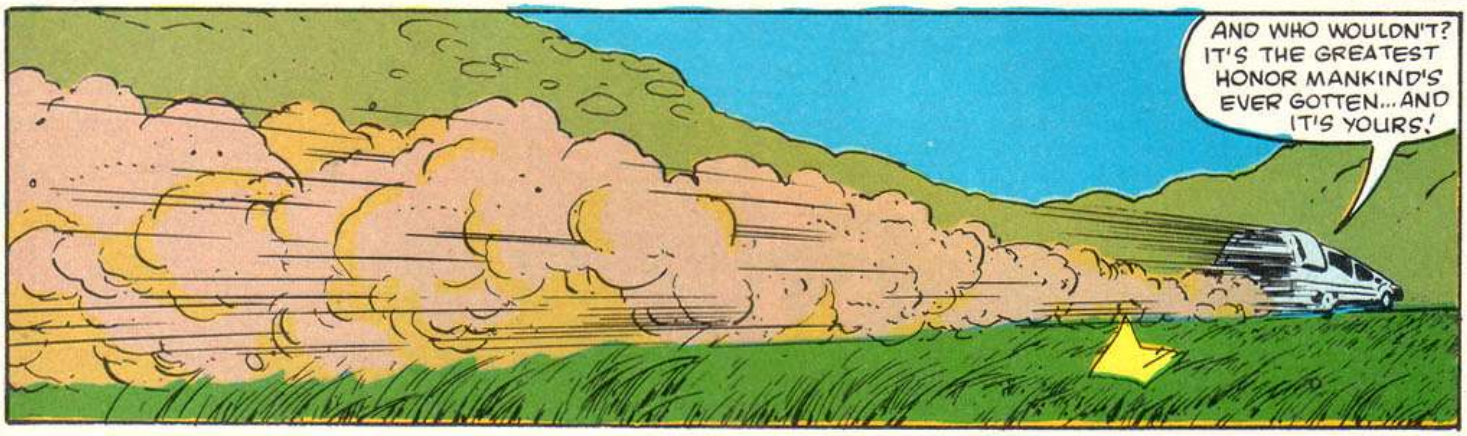

HI.
OW!
ZZIT

ALEX TRIES TO GET A CLOSER LOOK AT BETA, BUT...
BETA HAS SOME BUSINESS IN TOWN.

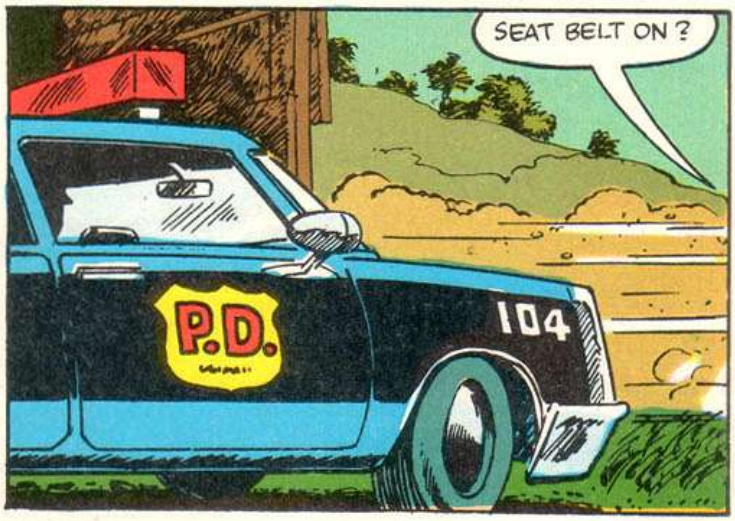

WHICH IS WHY CENTAURI'S HERE. GOT A LITTLE PROPOSITION FOR YOU... INTERESTED?
I GUESS...


JUST WHAT I WAS WAITING TO HEAR!
VRROARRROOMMM
HEY!!!

LISTEN, CENTAURI WANTS TO KEEP IT A SURPRISE. TRUST ME. YOU'RE GONNA LOVE IT. LOVE IT!
WH-WHAT ARE YOU DOING?


AND WHO WOULDN'T? IT'S THE GREATEST HONOR MANKIND'S EVER GOTTEN... AND IT'S YOURS!

AND THE AMUSING PART OF THIS IS THAT IT'S ALL A MISTAKE! THAT PARTICULAR STARFIGHTER GAME WAS SUPPOSED TO BE DELIVERED TO LAS VEGAS--
--NOT TO A FLEA-SPECK TRAILER PARK IN THE MIDDLE OF TUMBLEWEEDS AND TARANTULAS!
SO IT MUST BE FATE, DESTINY, BLIND CHANCE, LUCK EVEN, THAT BROUGHT US TOGETHER, AND, AS THE POETS SAY: "THE REST IS HISTORY!"


SEAT BELT ON?
P.D.
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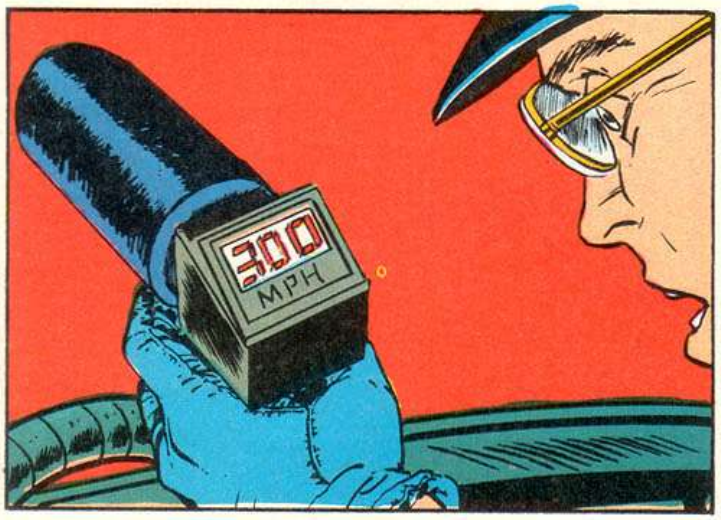
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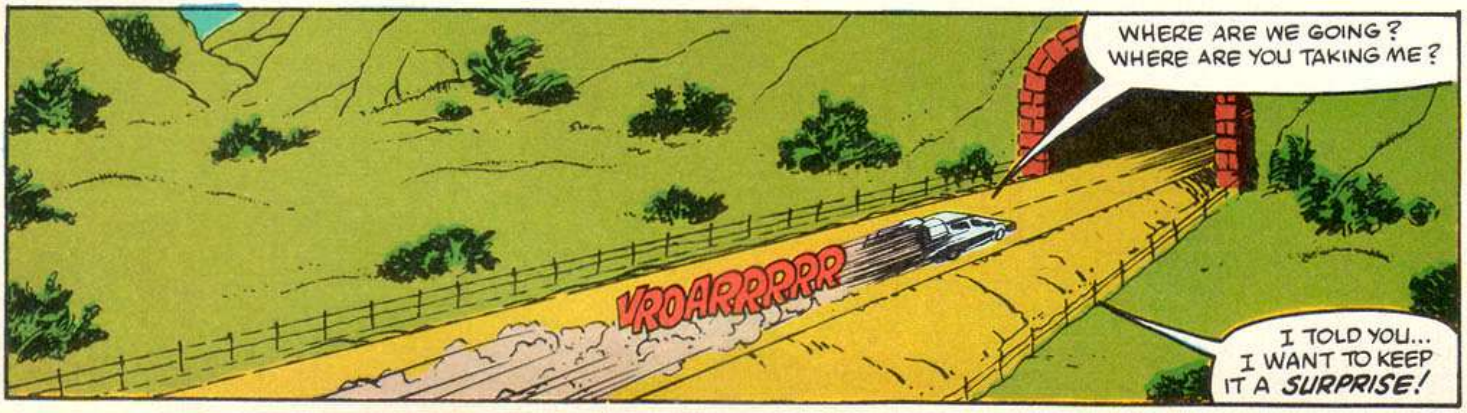
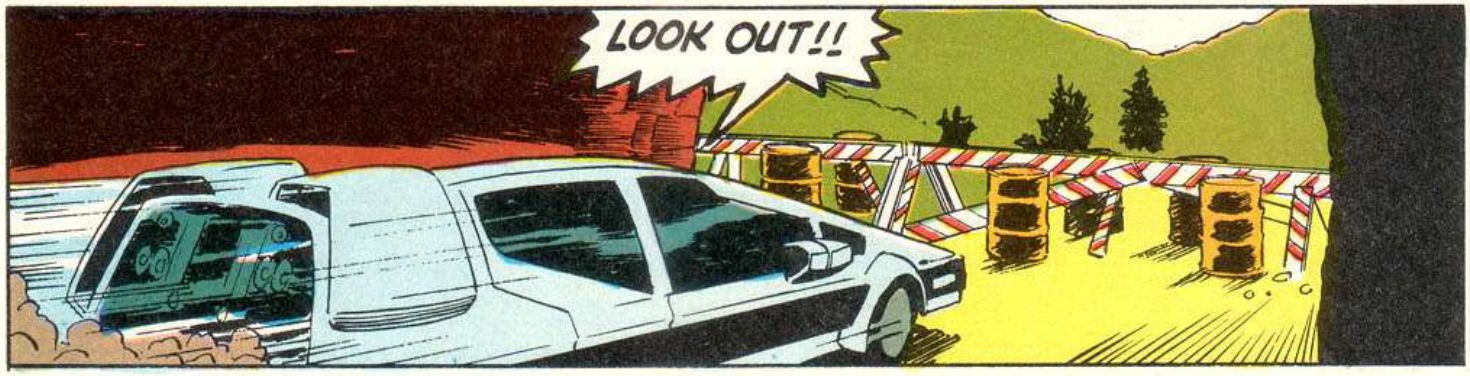
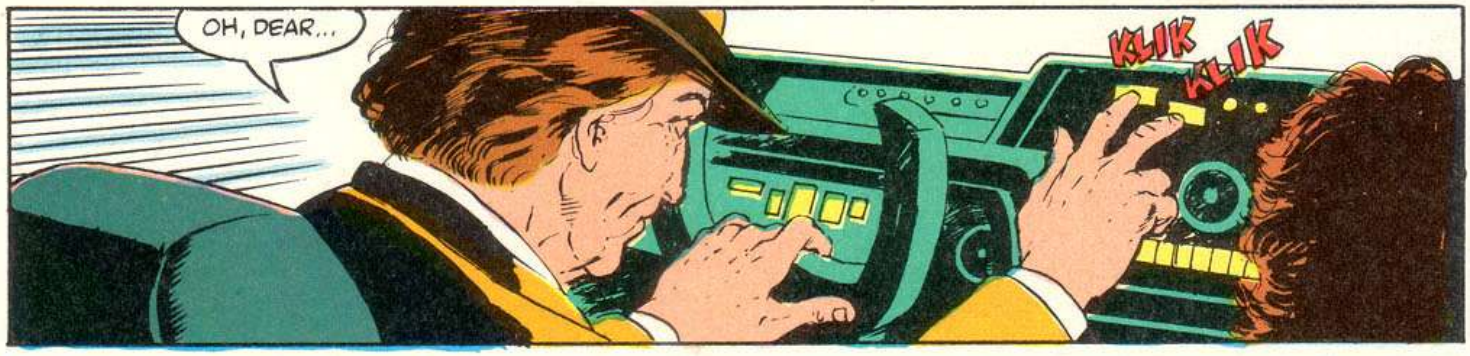
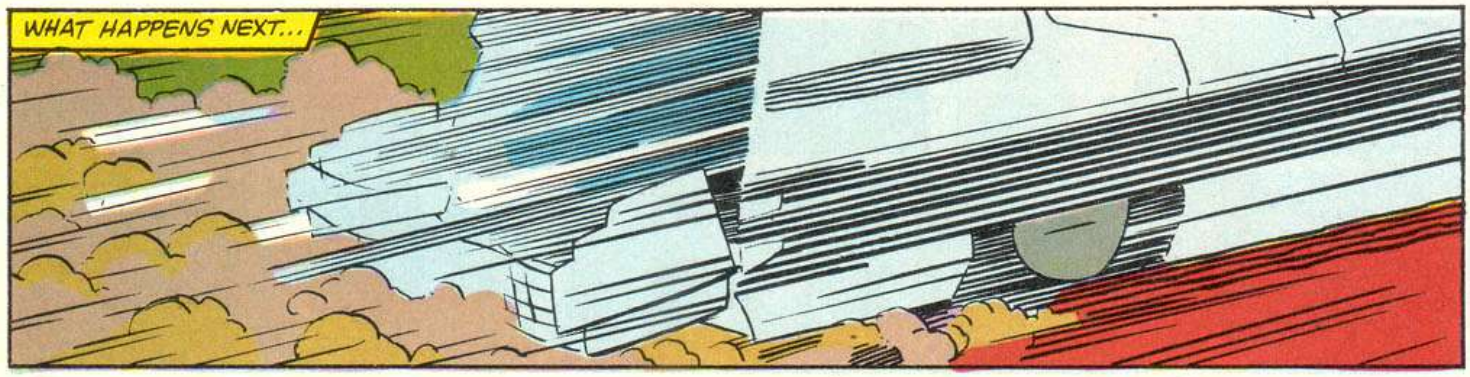
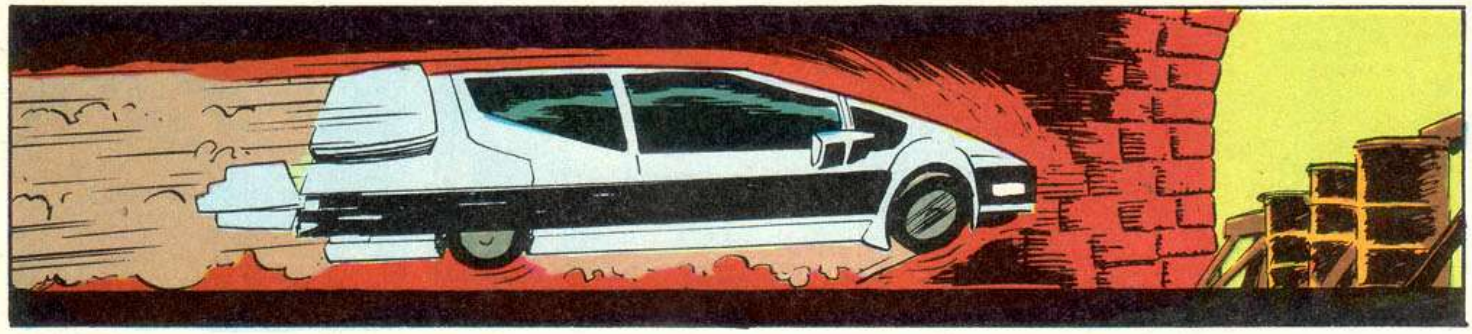

WHERE ARE WE GOING? WHERE ARE YOU TAKING ME?
VROARRRRRR
I TOLD YOU... I WANT TO KEEP IT A SURPRISE!

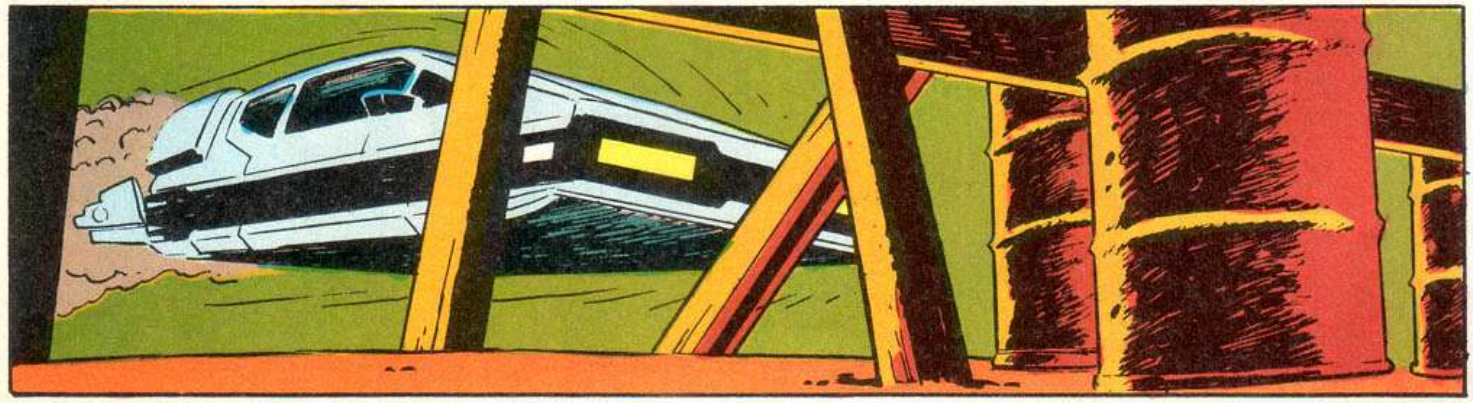
ARE YOU THE KIND'A KID WHO READS THE LAST PAGE OF THE MYSTERY FIRST? OR WHO SNEAKS DOWNSTAIRS TO PEEK UNDER THE CHRISTMAS TREE?
OF COURSE NOT! WHICH IS WHY I'M NOT GOING TO TELL YOU WHERE WE'RE GOING... YET! BESIDES, I LOVE SURPRISES, DON'T YOU?
L-L-L-L-L...

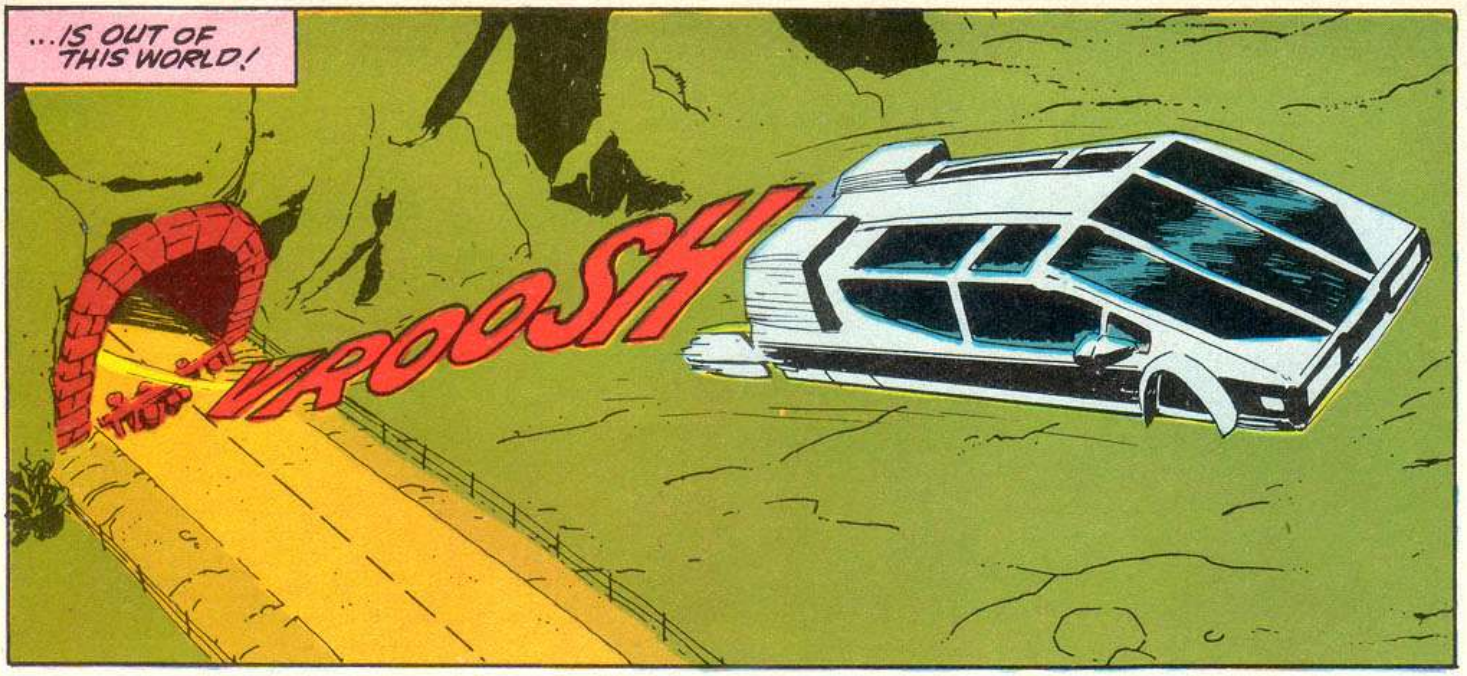

LOOK OUT!!


OH, DEAR...
KLIK
KLIK

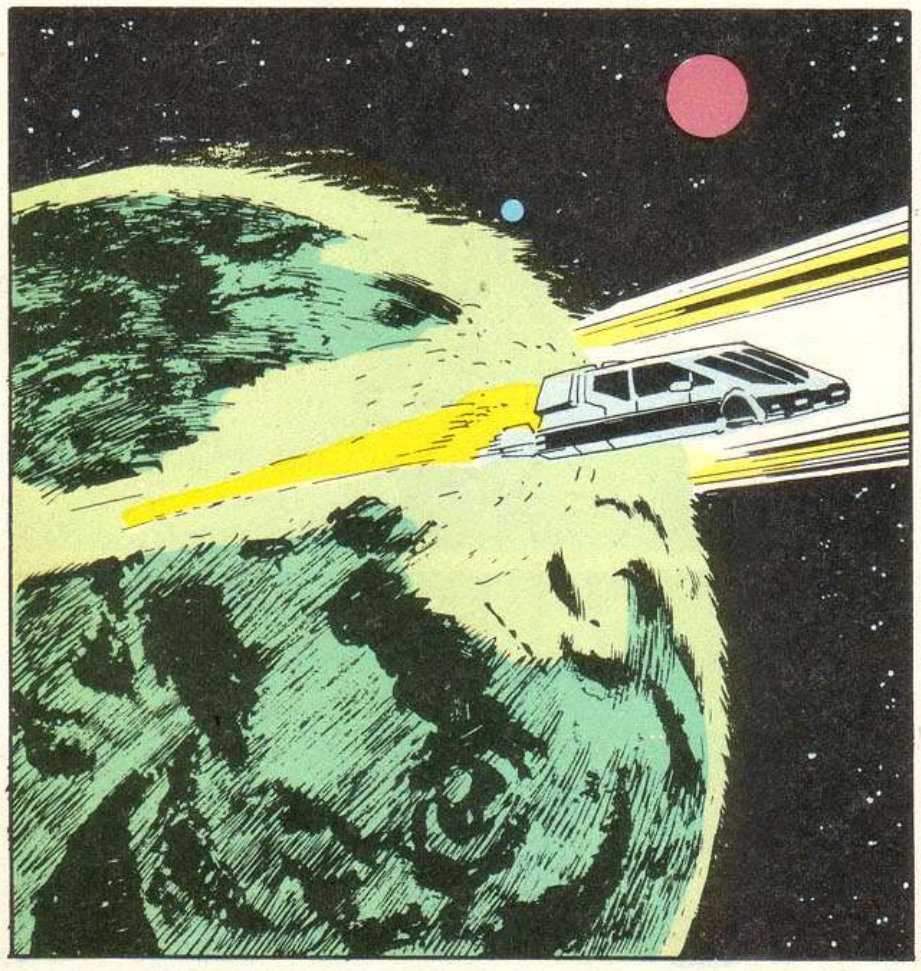

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT...






...IS OUT OF THIS WORLD!
VROOSH

FAR--



--OUT!

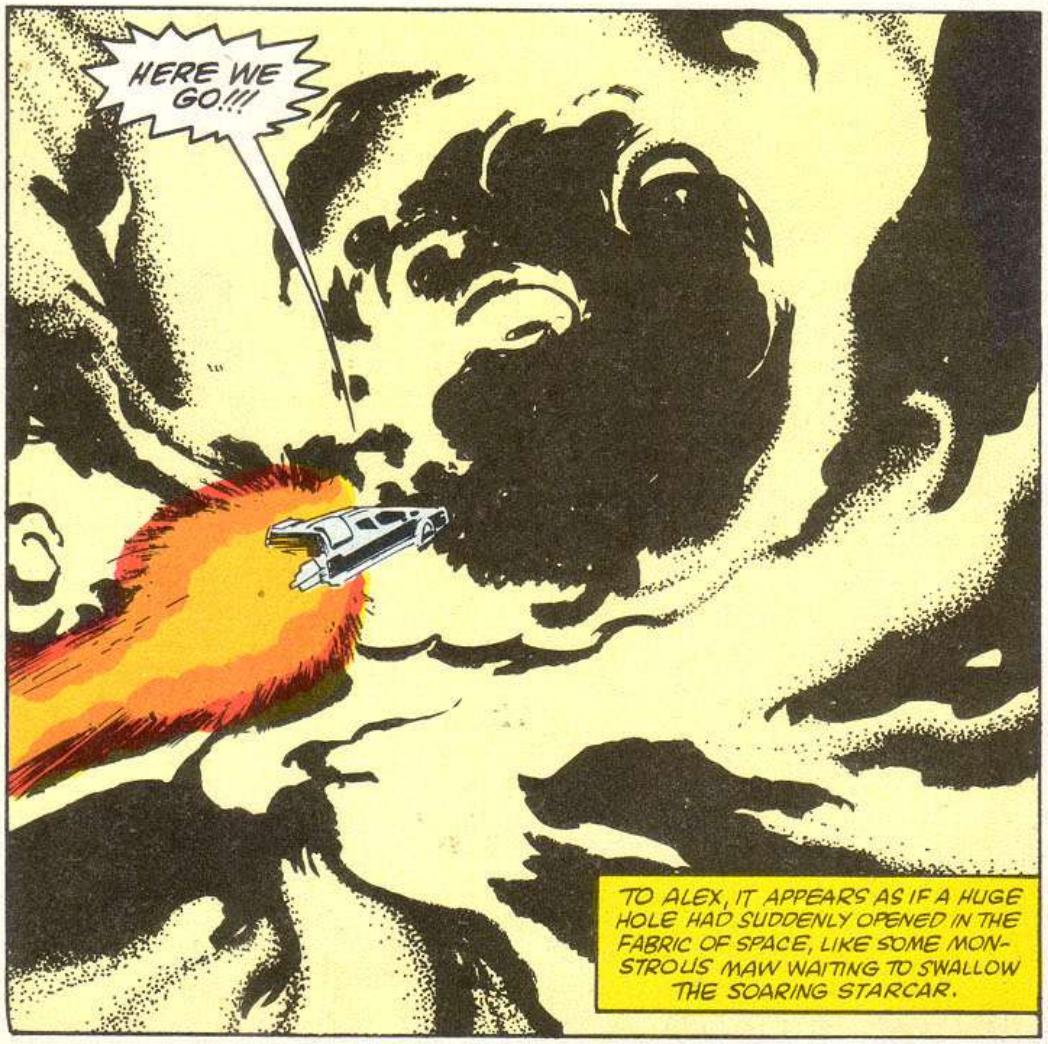
WELL, THAT'S DONE!

NOW WE CAN RELAX A LITTLE...

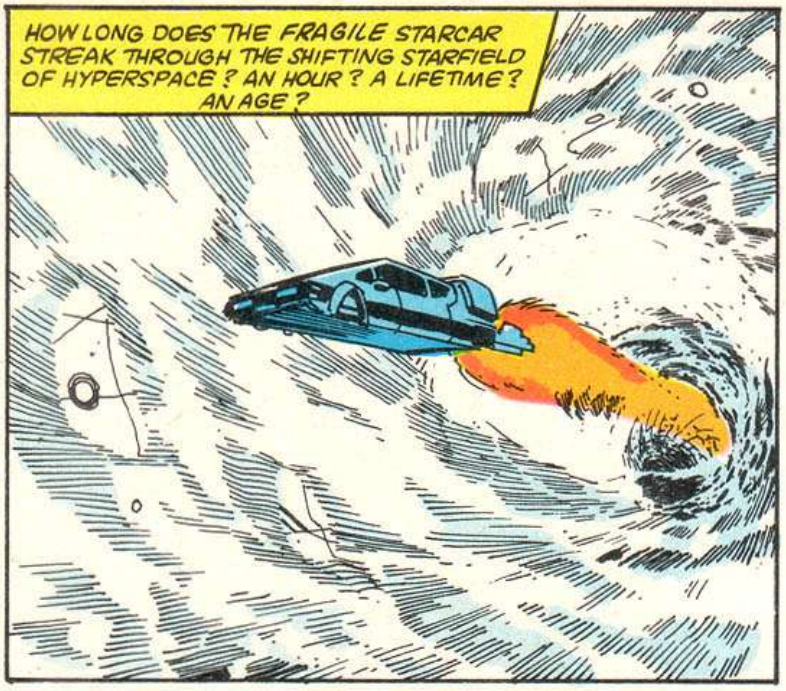
... AND JUST BE OURSELVES!

OH, BOY!

ALL SET?
WE'RE GOING TO SHIFT INTO STARDRIVE!

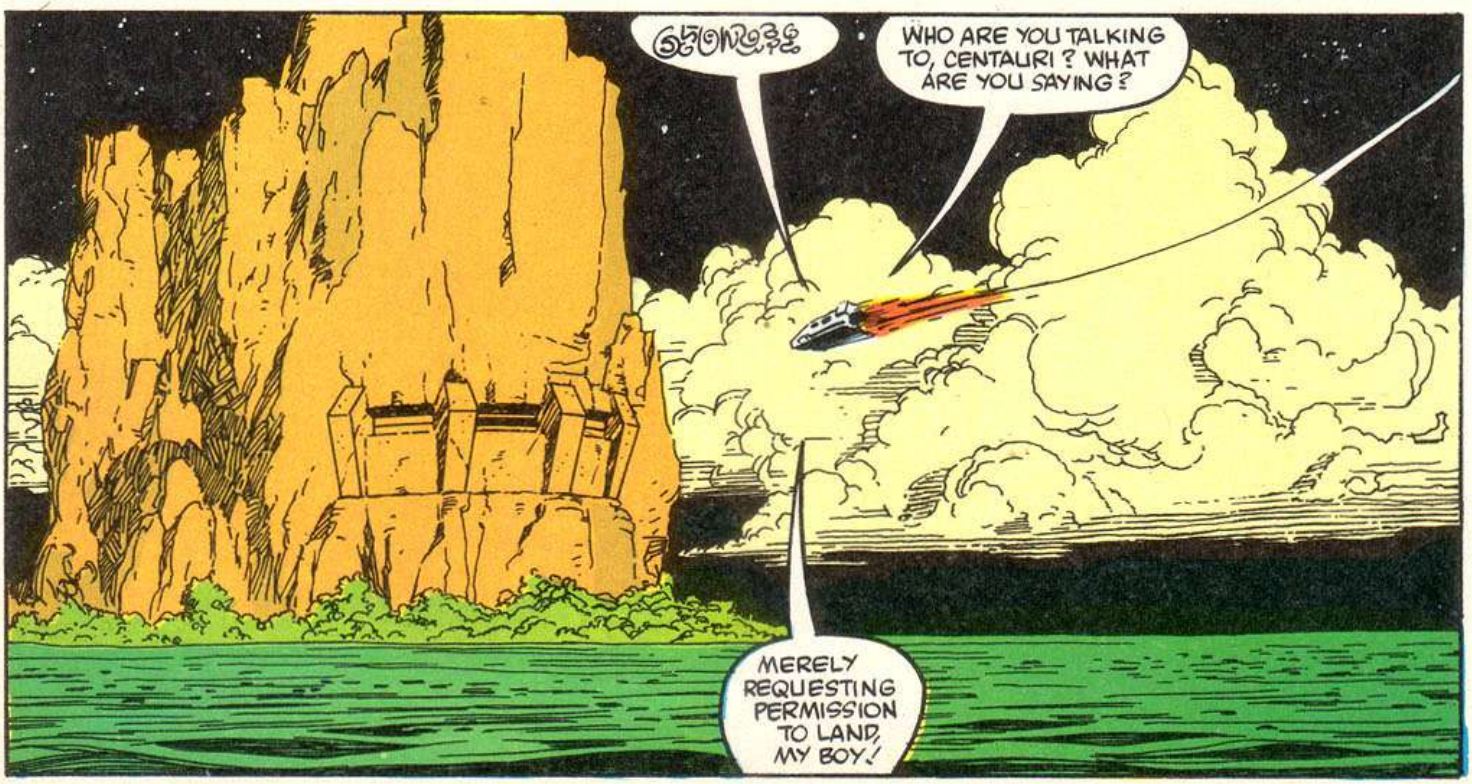

HERE WE GO!!!
TO ALEX, IT APPEARS AS IF A HUGE HOLE HAD SUDDENLY OPENED IN THE FABRIC OF SPACE, LIKE SOME MONSTROUS MAW WAITING TO SWALLOW THE SOARING STARCAR.

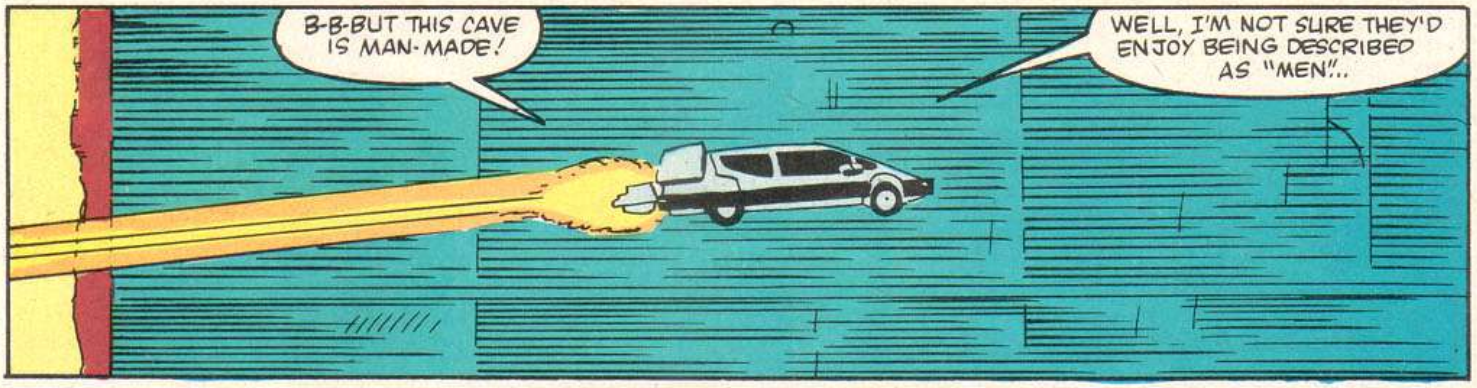
WAKE ME WHEN IT'S OVER, EH, BOY?

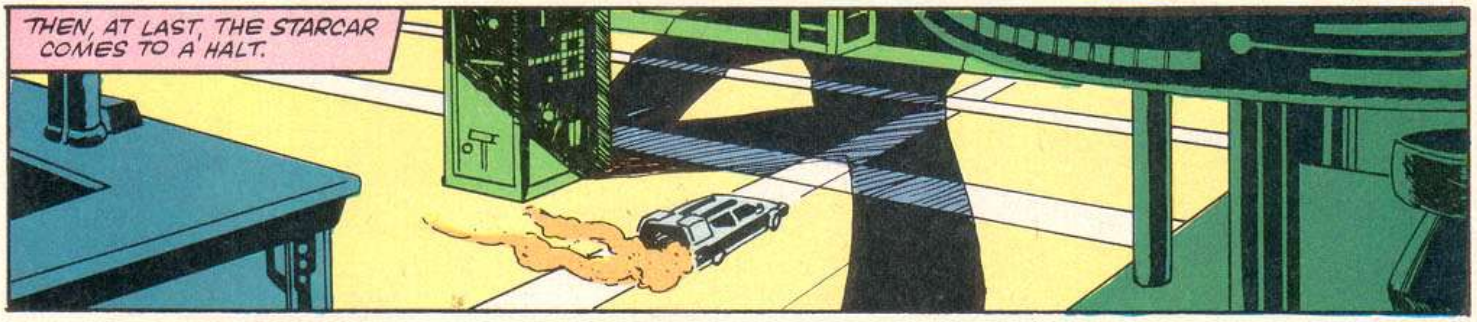

HOW LONG DOES THE FRAGILE STARCAR STREAK THROUGH THE SHIFTING STARFIELD OF HYPERSPACE? AN HOUR? A LIFETIME? AN AGE?

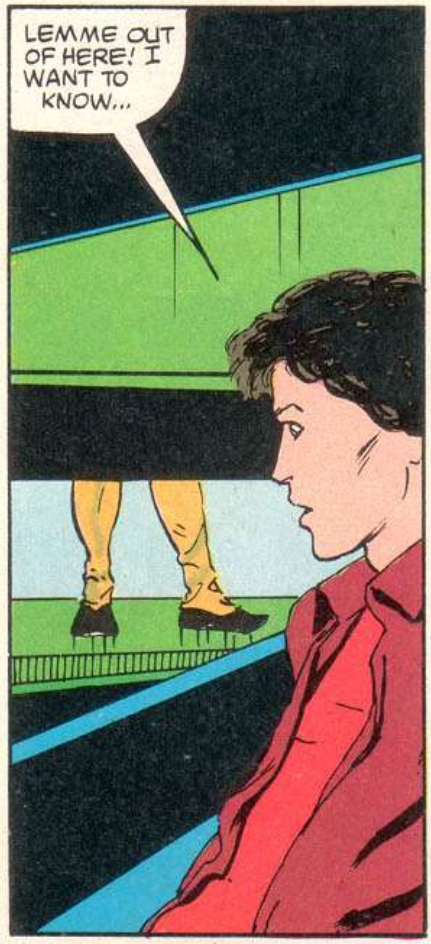
UH, MR. CENTAURI, I THINK MAYBE THE TRIP IS...

...OVER?!
ALEX ROGAN HAS SEEN ENOUGH PHOTOGRAPHS OF HIS PLANET FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF SPACE TO KNOW THAT THE WORLD HE'S LOOKING DOWN ON IS NOT THE EARTH!

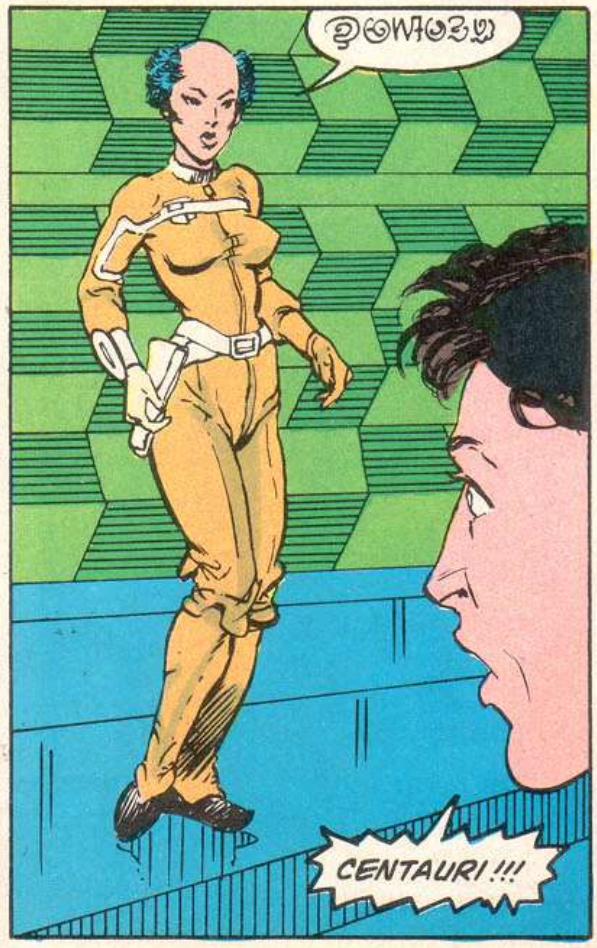

WHO ARE YOU TALKING TO, CENTAURI? WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
MERELY REQUESTING PERMISSION TO LAND, MY BOY!

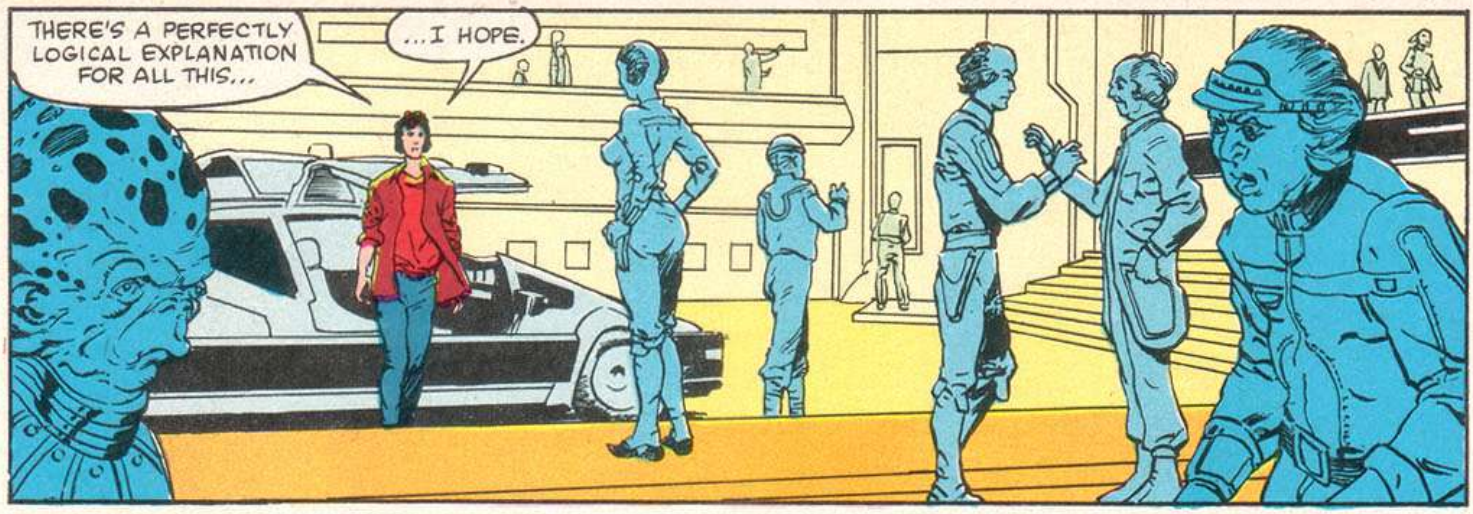

B-B-BUT THIS CAVE IS MAN-MADE!
WELL, I'M NOT SURE THEY'D ENJOY BEING DESCRIBED AS "MEN"...


THEN, AT LAST, THE STARCAR COMES TO A HALT.

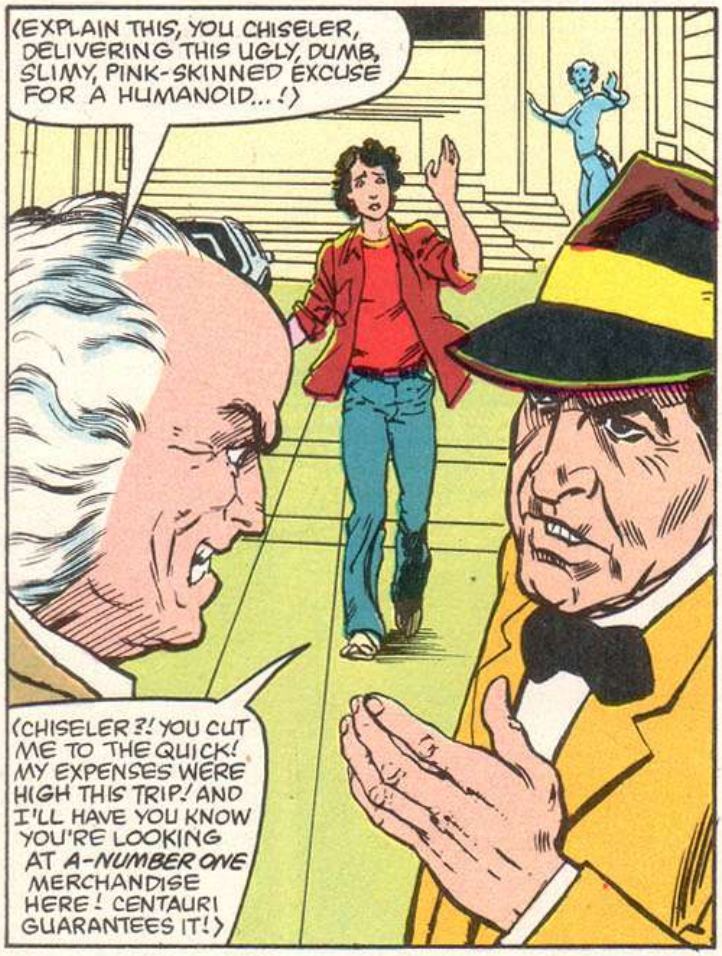

LEMME OUT OF HERE! I WANT TO KNOW...

C-CENTAURI...?


CENTAURI!!!

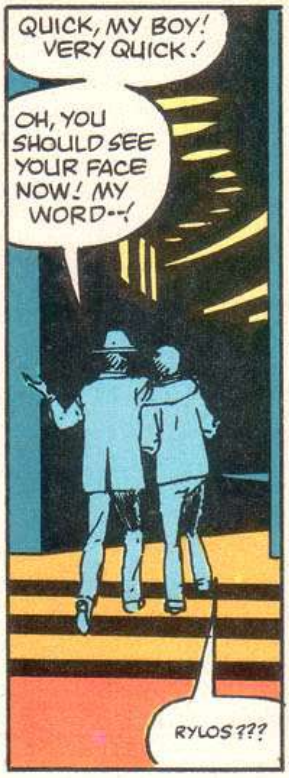

THERE'S A PERFECTLY LOGICAL EXPLANATION FOR ALL THIS...
...I HOPE.

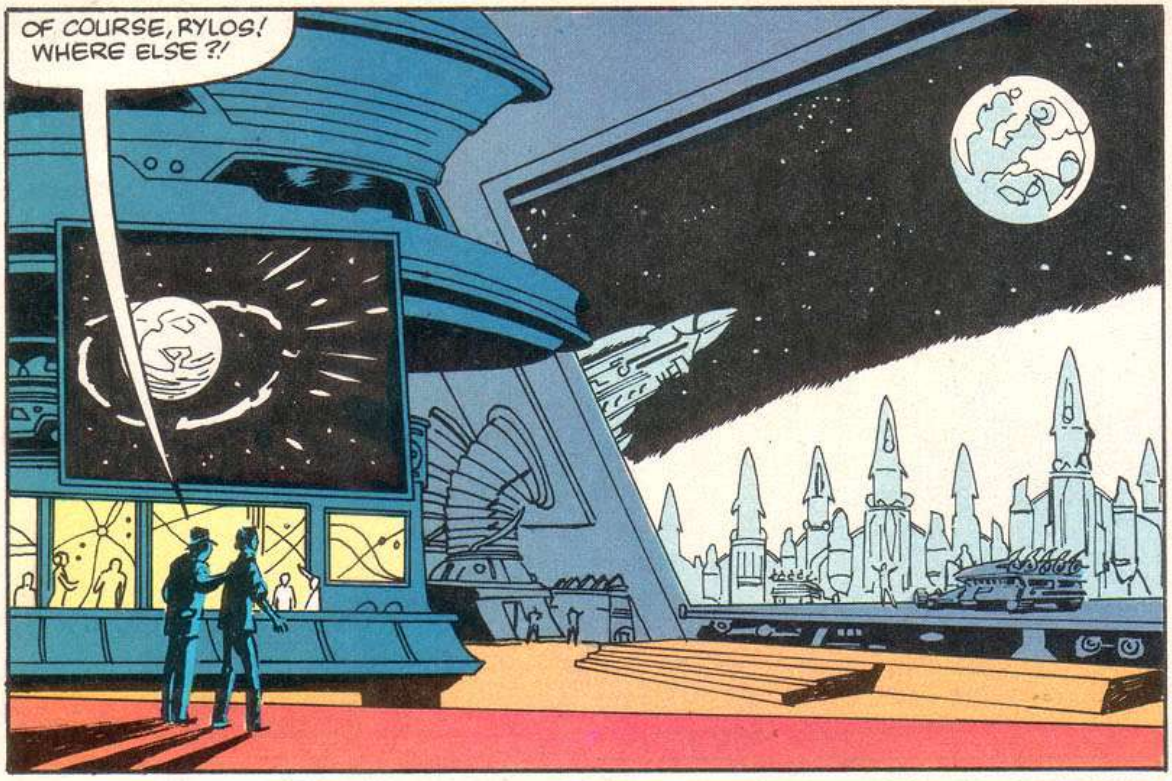
GOTTA TRY TO COMMUNICATE WITH THEM!
PARDON ME, BUT DOES ANYONE AROUND HERE SPEAK EARTH?!!
HEY! CENTAURI!


(EXPLAIN THIS, YOU CHISELER, DELIVERING THIS UGLY, DUMB, SLIMY, PINK-SKINNED EXCUSE FOR A HUMANOID...!)
(CHISELER?! YOU CUT ME TO THE QUICK! MY EXPENSES WERE HIGH THIS TRIP! AND I'LL HAVE YOU KNOW YOU'RE LOOKING AT A-NUMBER ONE MERCHANDISE HERE! CENTAURI GUARANTEES IT!)

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE, CENTAURI? WHERE THE HECK ARE WE?!
WHERE? DIDN'T I TELL YOU YOU WERE IN FOR A SURPRISE? WELL, THIS IS IT! WELCOME, MY BOY... TO THE PLANET RYLOS!
RYLOS?

LIKE IN "THE LAST STARFIGHTER" GAME?
THAT RYLOS?!


QUICK, MY BOY! VERY QUICK!
OH, YOU SHOULD SEE YOUR FACE NOW! MY WORD--!
RYLOS???


OF COURSE, RYLOS! WHERE ELSE?!

GUNSTARS! NOW I KNOW I'M DREAMING!

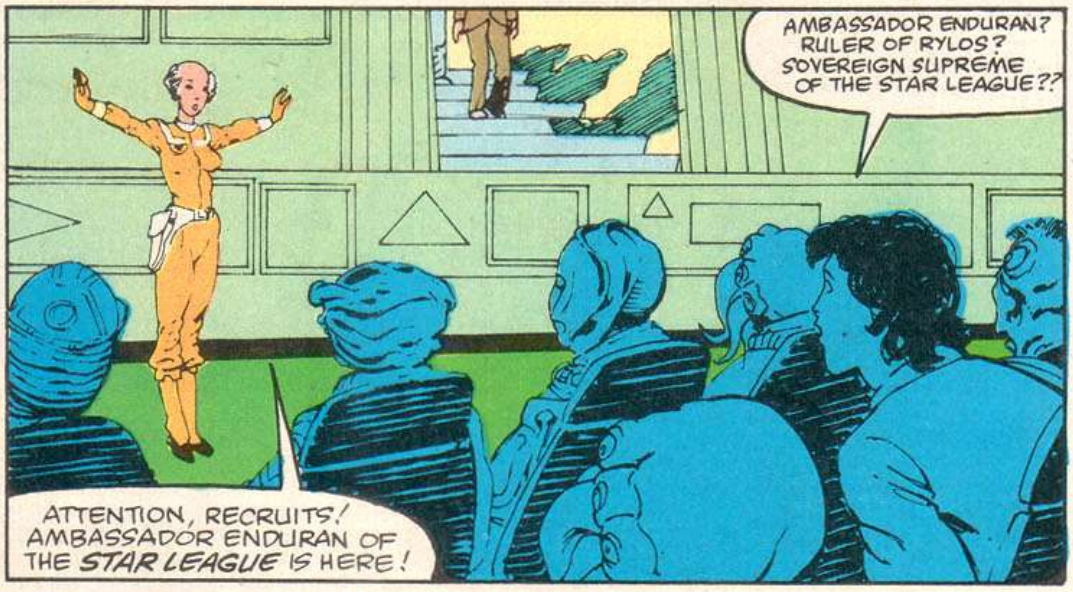
AGAIN CENTAURI VANISHES WHILE ALEX STANDS STUNNED, AND THE NEXT SECOND THE EARTH LAD IS SWEPT AWAY BY TWO JABBERING RYLANS...
LISTEN, THIS IS ALL A BIG MISTAKE...!
NO MISTAKE. WELCOME TO STARFIGHTER COMMAND.
HEY! YOU SPEAK ENGLISH!

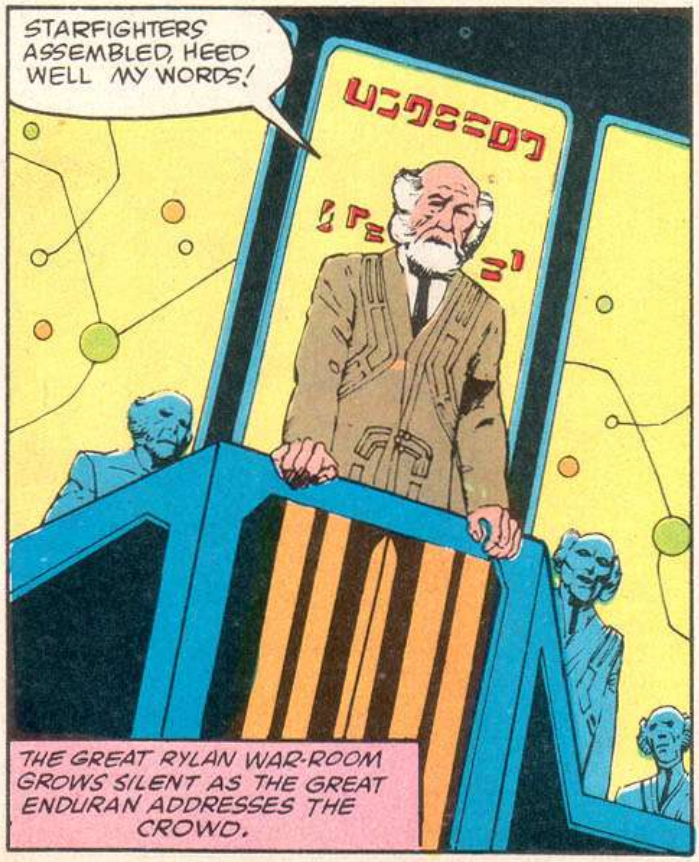
HURRY! WE DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME! THE BRIEFING BEGINS IMMEDIATELY! TAKE YOUR PLACE WITH THE OTHER RECRUITS!
RECRUITS?!

I DON'T BELIEVE THIS! OH, 'SCUSE ME! SORRY! I DIDN'T MEAN....!
OW! I SHOULD GRIND YOU TO GORUN DUST!
CAREFUL! YOU DON'T TRIFLE WITH A BODATI!
THEY JUST LOVE TO FIGHT! THAT'S WHY THEY'RE PERFECT FOR THIS WAR!

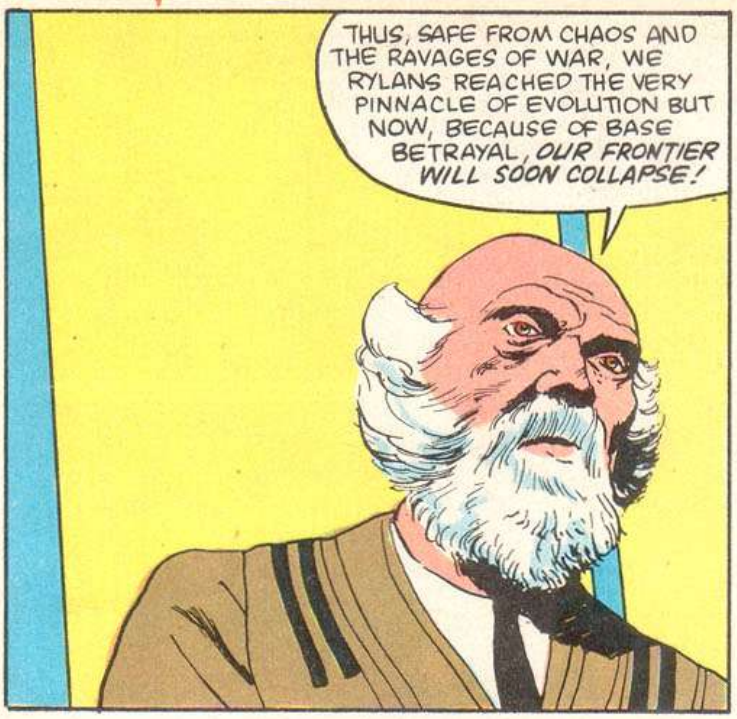
WAR? DID YOU SAY... WAR?!
BUT, OF COURSE! WHY ELSE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE HERE? YOU'VE BEEN RECRUITED BY THE STAR LEAGUE--
--TO DEFEND THE FRONTIER AGAINST XUR AND THE KO-DAN ARMADA!

HELP! CENTAURI, GET ME OUTTA HERE!!!


AMBASSADOR ENDURAN? RULER OF RYLOS? SOVEREIGN SUPREME OF THE STAR LEAGUE??
ATTENTION, RECRUITS! AMBASSADOR ENDURAN OF THE STAR LEAGUE IS HERE!


STARFIGHTERS ASSEMBLED, HEED WELL MY WORDS!
THE GREAT RYLAN WAR-ROOM GROWS SILENT AS THE GREAT ENDURAN ADDRESSES THE CROWD.

EONS AGO, OUR ANCESTORS CREATED OUR GREAT FRONTIER.
--A BARRIER OF ENERGY ENCIRCLING THE PEACEFUL GALAXIES OF THE UNIVERSE AND FOREVER SHUTTING OUT THE SCOURGE THAT LURKS BEYOND.


THUS, SAFE FROM CHAOS AND THE RAVAGES OF WAR, WE RYLANS REACHED THE VERY PINNACLE OF EVOLUTION BUT NOW, BECAUSE OF BASE BETRAYAL, OUR FRONTIER WILL SOON COLLAPSE!

AND SO, WE HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO DUST OFF THESE ANCIENT RELICS-- THESE ANTIQUATED WAR MACHINES FROM OUR PRIMITIVE PAST WHICH WE RYLANS NO LONGER EVEN KNOW HOW TO FLY...

"... AND TURN TO YOU STARFIGHTERS, FOR OF THE BILLIONS OF BEINGS IN THE STAR LEAGUE, ONLY YOU FEW WERE FOUND TO POSSESS THE GIFT... AND ONLY YOU ARE CAPABLE OF WIELDING ITS POWER TO PREVENT OUR DESTRUCTION BY THE BLACK TERROR OF THE EVIL KO-DAN!
VICTORY OR DEATH! VICTORY OR DEATH!
"GIFT?" "VICTORY OR DEATH?" OH, NO! NOT ME!

OH, PARDON ME, STARFIGHTER, BUT I AM YOUR NAVIGATOR--GRIG--REPORTING FOR DUTY, SIR.
STARFIGHTER! I WAS PLAYING THIS GAME BACK HOME WHEN THIS ALIEN SCOOPED ME OFF EARTH AND DROPPED ME DOWN HERE AND... THERE'S BEEN A BIG MISTAKE!
AM I TO UNDERSTAND THAT YOU ARE ACTUALLY DECLINING THE HONOR OF BECOMING A STARFIGHTER?

CENTAURI! DID IT NEVER OCCUR TO YOU THAT IT IS AGAINST THE LAW TO RECRUIT FROM WORLDS OUTSIDE OUR STAR LEAGUE? TO TEST RECRUITS UNWILLING TO BECOME STAR-FIGHTERS?
BUT EARTH'S IN DANGER, TOO, ISN'T IT? AND THE BOY PASSED THE TEST! TRUE, I DID DISGUISE IT AS A SIMPLE VIDEO-GAME, BUT HE GOT THE HIGHEST KNOWN SCORE...
HE CAN BECOME THE GREATEST STARFIGHTER EVER!
BUT I WAS ONLY PLAYING A GAME, CENTAURI!

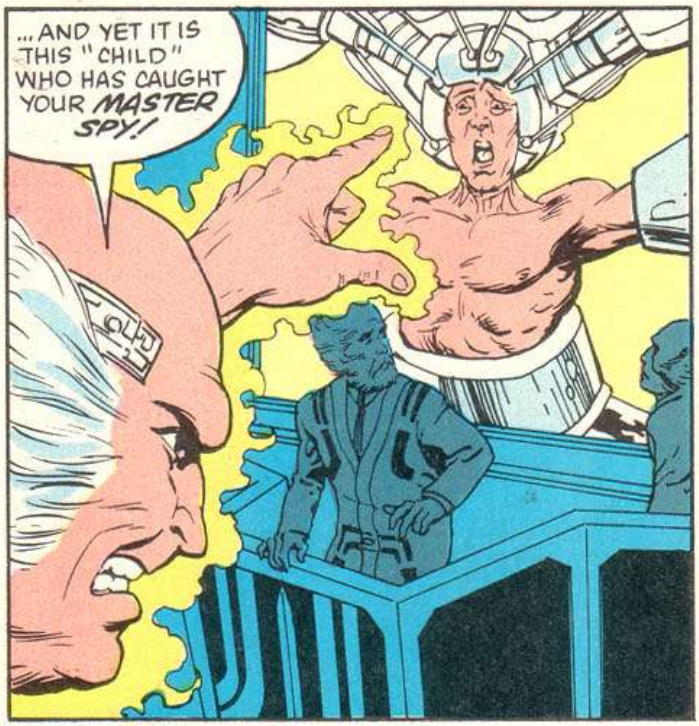
A GAME?! MAYBE YOU THOUGHT IT WAS A GAME, BUT IT WAS ALSO A TEST-- A TEST SENT OUT ACROSS THE GALAXIES TO FIND THOSE WITH THE GIFT TO BECOME STARFIGHTERS! AND HERE YOU ARE, MY BOY! HERE YOU ARE!
RIGHT! HERE I AM ABOUT TO GET MYSELF KILLED!

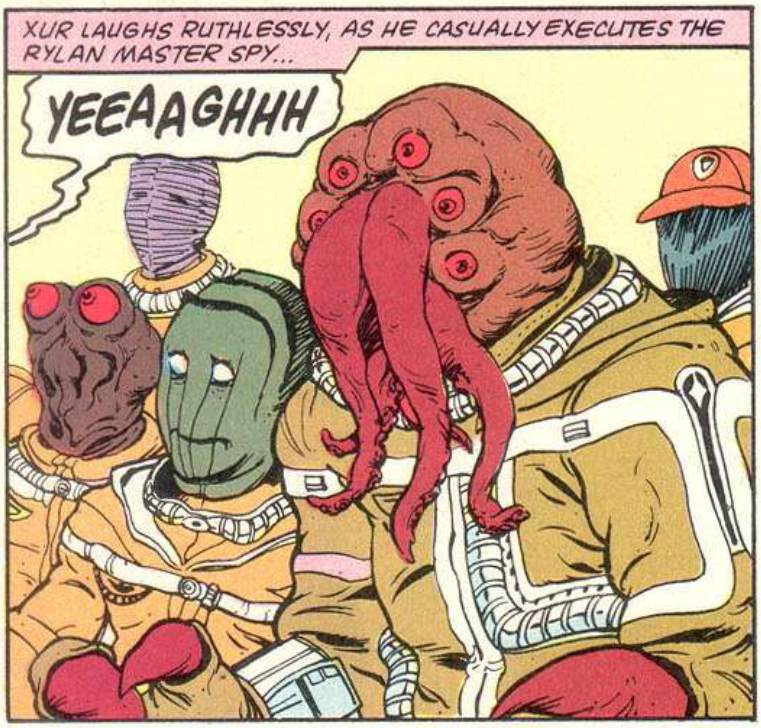
KILLED?! WHY, YOU DON'T SERIOUSLY THINK THAT BECOMING A STARFIGHTER INVOLVES ANYTHING DANGEROUS, DO YOU? DON'T BE SILLY! TRUST OLD CENTAURI!
EH?
SUDDENLY A CHILL WIND STRIKES ALL THOSE ASSEMBLED...
AN IMAGE BEAM! IF IT CAN PENETRATE TO THE VERY HEART OF HEADQUARTERS LIKE THIS, IT MUST MEAN THAT OUR FRONTIER IS WEAKENING!
BUT WHO-- OR WHAT-- IS THAT GUY?!
THE BASE BETRAYER! THE ULTIMATE EVIL!
XUR, LEADER OF THE KO-DAN ARMADA!
XUR--?!

GREETINGS, FATHER! I COME TO TELL YOU THAT YOUR MIGHTY FRONTIER-- THE ENERGY BARRIER THAT IS ALL THAT PROTECTS RYLOS FROM THE KO-DAN-- GROWS WEAKER BY THE MOMENT!
OUTCAST! EXILE! YOUR ACTS BETRAY YOUR EVIL!
BEGONE! YOU ARE NO LONGER WORTHY TO BE CALLED MY SON!

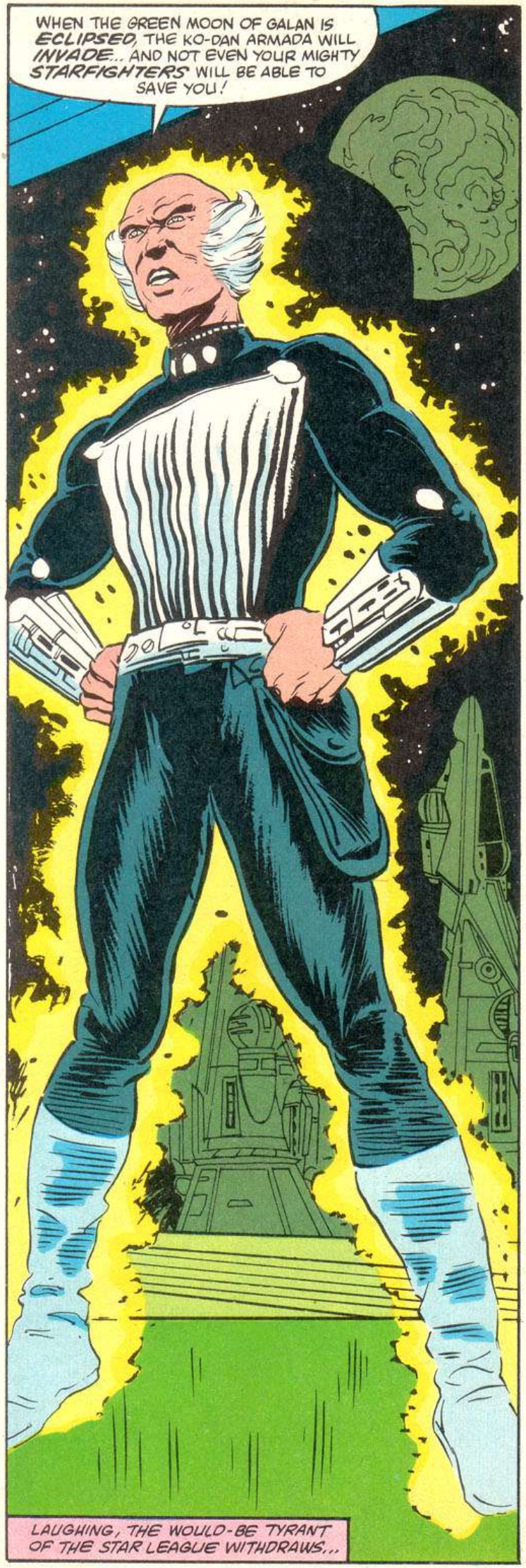
EXILE? HEY, GRIG, WHAT'D XUR DO THAT WAS SO BAD?
HE TRIED TO SEIZE CONTROL OF THE STAR LEAGUE AND MAKE HIMSELF A DICTATOR! HE'S A SCOUNDREL!

THE STAR LEAGUE DEFEATED THE KO-DAN BEFORE-- AND WILL DO IT AGAIN!
STAR LEAGUE! A REFUGE FOR WEAK, PACIFISTIC WORLDS! I WOULD BE MASTER OF THEM ALL!
YOU ARE A DERANGED AND DANGEROUS CHILD...!


...AND YET IT IS THIS "CHILD" WHO HAS CAUGHT YOUR MASTER SPY!


XUR LAUGHS RUTHLESSLY, AS HE CASUALLY EXECUTES THE RYLAN MASTER SPY...
YEEAAGHHH

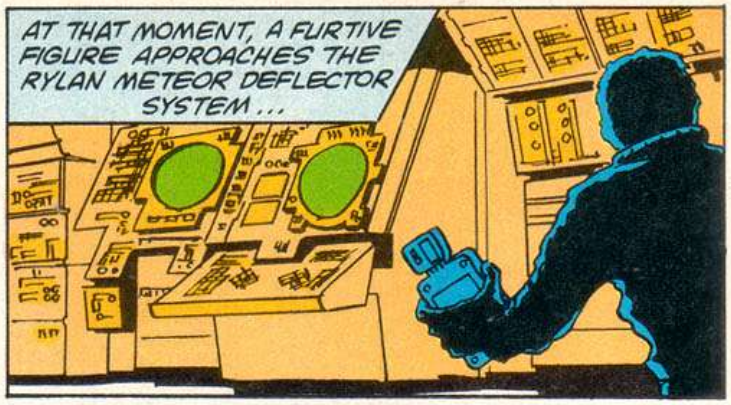
HEAR ME, RYLANS!


WHEN THE GREEN MOON OF GALAN IS ECLIPSED, THE KO-DAN ARMADA WILL INVADE... AND NOT EVEN YOUR MIGHTY STARFIGHTERS WILL BE ABLE TO SAVE YOU!
LAUGHING, THE WOULD-BE TYRANT OF THE STAR LEAGUE WITHDRAWS...

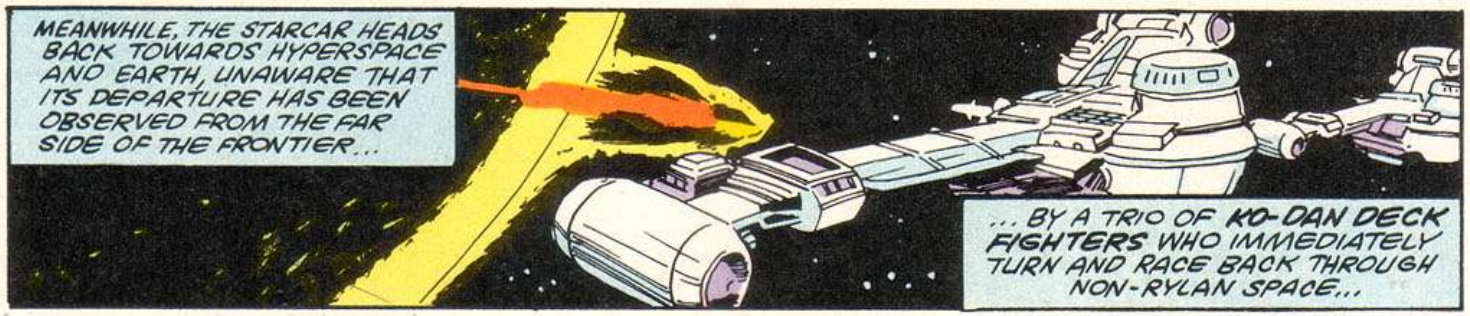
GOSH!
ARROGANT, IS HE NOT?
SO WHAT DO YOU SAY, MY BOY? EH, ALEX? DO YOU STILL WANNA GO AND MISS OUT ON ALL THE EXCITEMENT?!

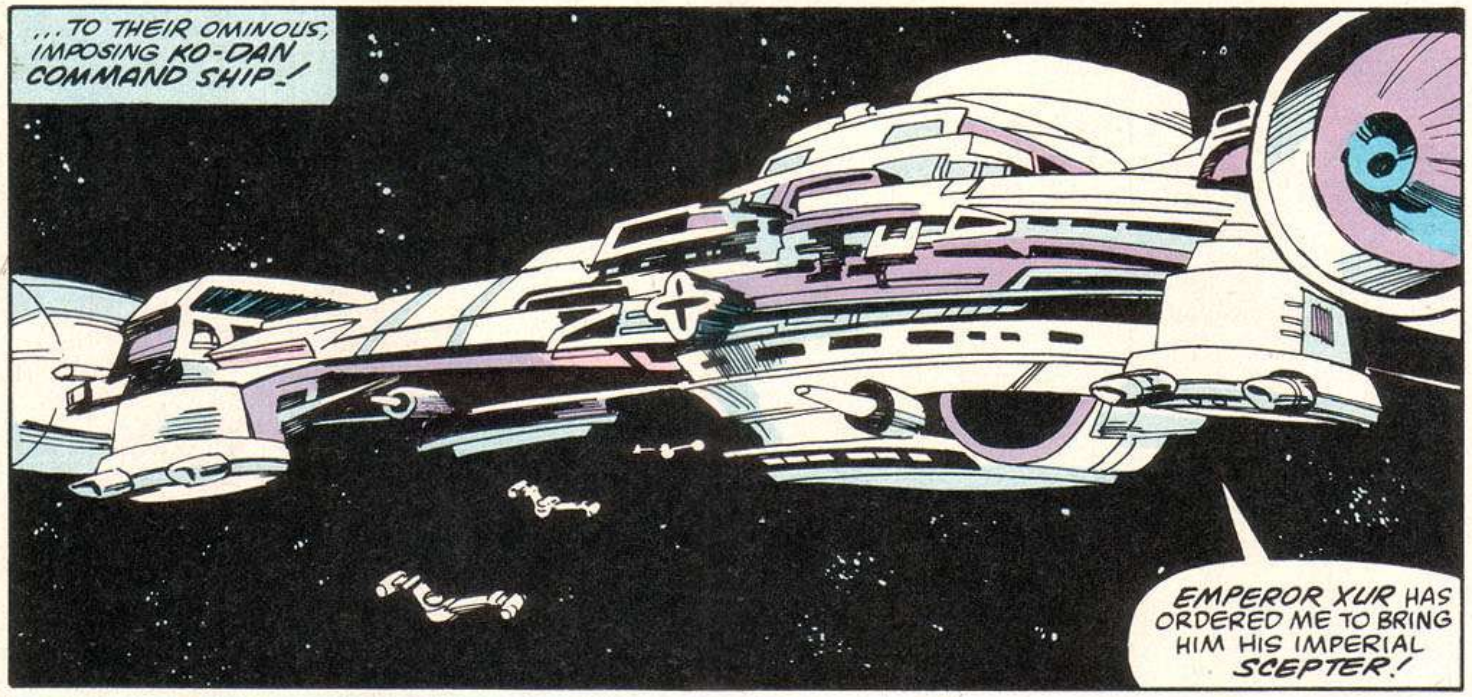
YOU BET, CENTAURI! GET ME OUTTA HERE!!

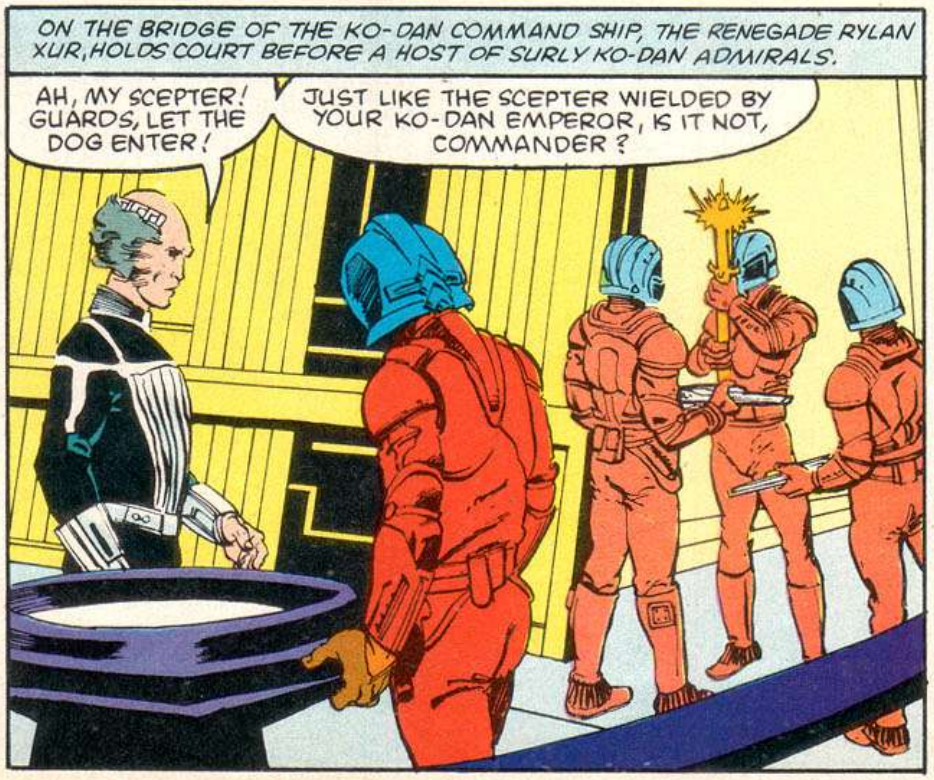
AND THUS, MUCH TO CENTAURI'S CONSTERNATION (SINCE IT FORCES HIM TO GIVE ALEX'S RECRUITMENT BOUNTY BACK), ALEX ROGAN LEAVES RYLOS...
...LITTLE BRAT! INVENT THE GAME! FIND THE KID! DRAG HIM UP HERE! BUT HE DOESN'T WANT TO BE A STARFIGHTER! HOME TO MOMMY! I GIVE UP! I'LL NEVER MESS WITH FRINGE WORLDS LIKE EARTH AGAIN!


AT THAT MOMENT, A FURTIVE FIGURE APPROACHES THE RYLAN METEOR DEFLECTOR SYSTEM...

WITHIN SECONDS...
KA-BLAM


MEANWHILE, THE STARCAR HEADS BACK TOWARDS HYPERSPACE AND EARTH, UNAWARE THAT ITS DEPARTURE HAS BEEN OBSERVED FROM THE FAR SIDE OF THE FRONTIER...
... BY A TRIO OF KO-DAN DECK FIGHTERS WHO IMMEDIATELY TURN AND RACE BACK THROUGH NON-RYLAN SPACE...

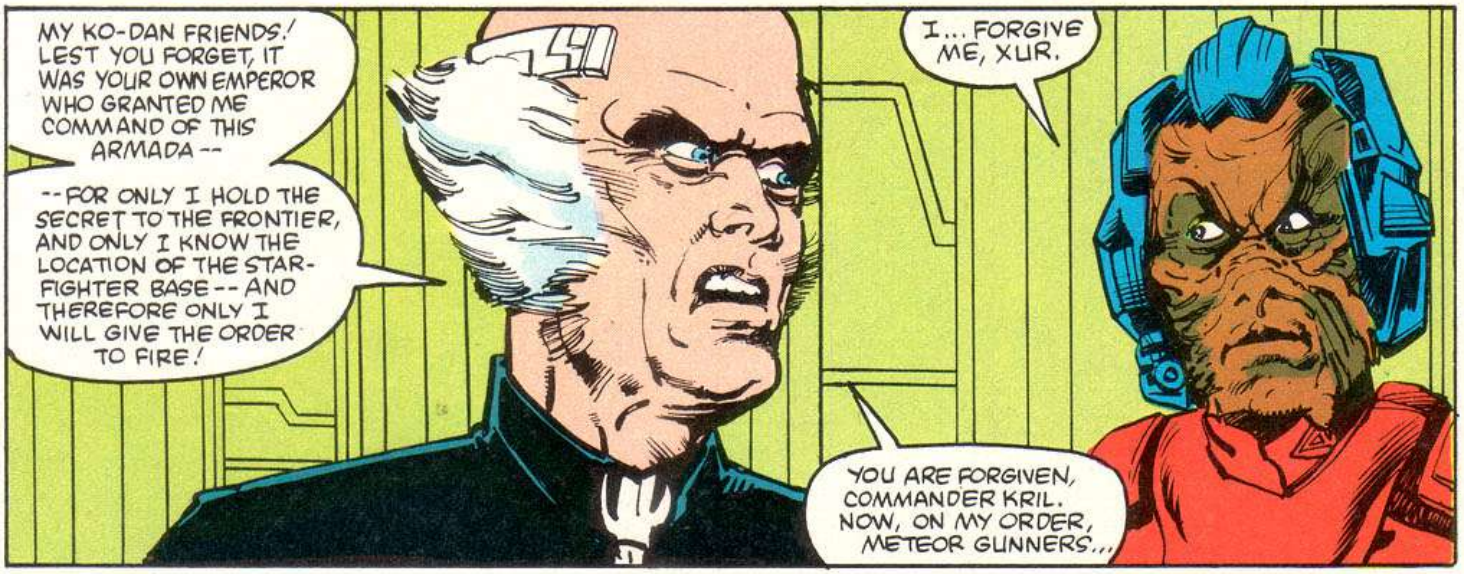

...TO THEIR OMINOUS, IMPOSING KO-DAN COMMAND SHIP-!
EMPEROR XUR HAS ORDERED ME TO BRING HIM HIS IMPERIAL SCEPTER!

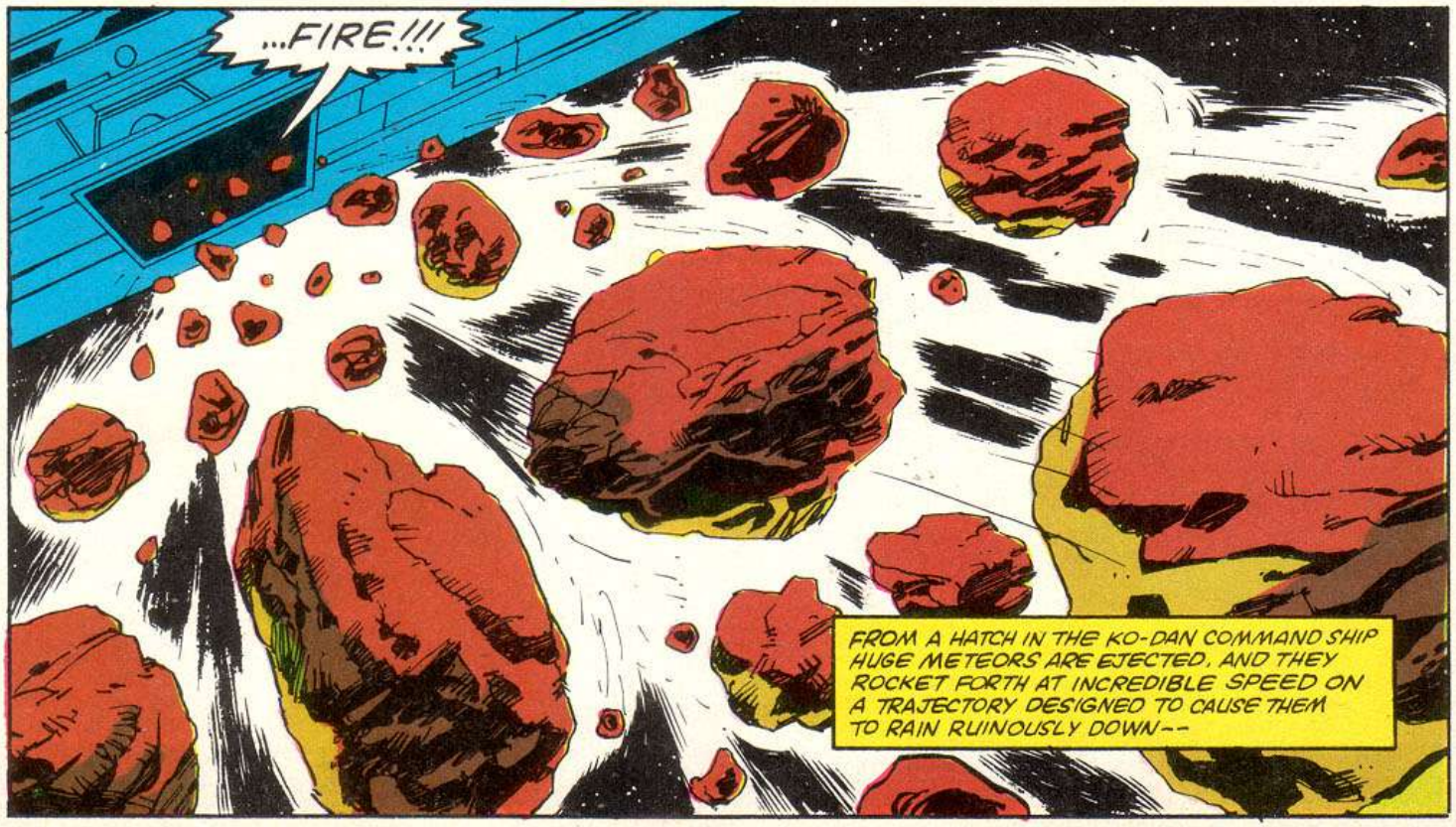

ON THE BRIDGE OF THE KO-DAN COMMAND SHIP, THE RENEGADE RYLAN XUR, HOLDS COURT BEFORE A HOST OF SURLY KO-DAN ADMIRALS.
AH, MY SCEPTER! GUARDS, LET THE DOG ENTER!
JUST LIKE THE SCEPTER WIELDED BY YOUR KO-DAN EMPEROR, IS IT NOT, COMMANDER?

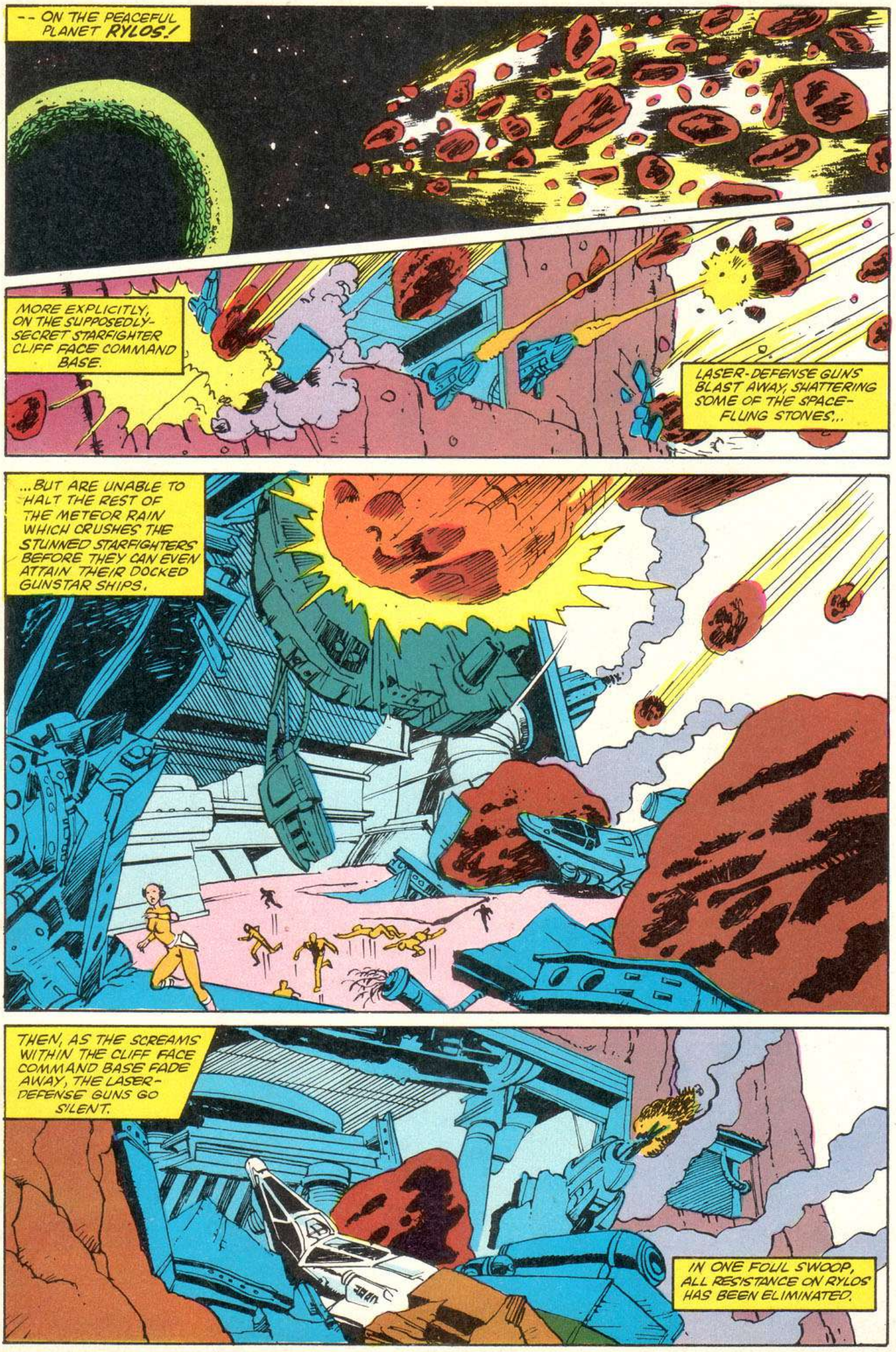
IT TAKES MORE THAN A SCEPTER TO RULE, XUR.
AH, YES, YOU'RE RIGHT, COMMANDER KRIL! IT DOES TAKE MORE THAN A SCEPTER TO RULE!

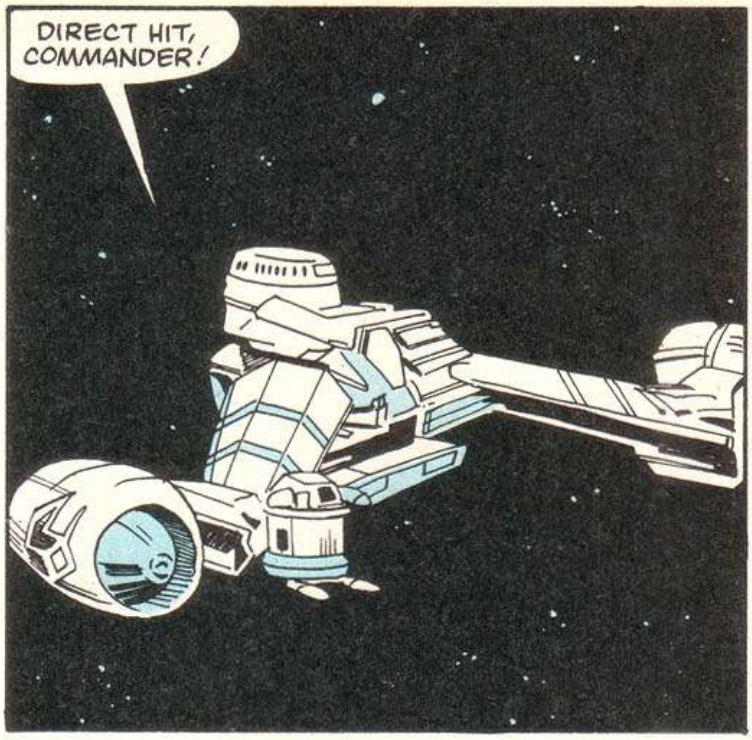
MUCH MORE!

HOW LONG MUST WE SUFFER THIS FOOL TO "LEAD" US?
COMMANDER KRIL! WE RECORD A BREAK IN THE FRONTIER!
FIRE THE METEOR GUN!
WAIT!


MY KO-DAN FRIENDS! LEST YOU FORGET, IT WAS YOUR OWN EMPEROR WHO GRANTED ME COMMAND OF THIS ARMADA --
--FOR ONLY I HOLD THE SECRET TO THE FRONTIER, AND ONLY I KNOW THE LOCATION OF THE STAR-FIGHTER BASE -- AND THEREFORE ONLY I WILL GIVE THE ORDER TO FIRE!
I... FORGIVE ME, XUR.
YOU ARE FORGIVEN, COMMANDER KRIL. NOW, ON MY ORDER, METEOR GUNNERS...


...FIRE!!!
FROM A HATCH IN THE KO-DAN COMMAND SHIP HUGE METEORS ARE EJECTED, AND THEY ROCKET FORTH AT INCREDIBLE SPEED ON A TRAJECTORY DESIGNED TO CAUSE THEM TO RAIN RUINOUSLY DOWN--


-- ON THE PEACEFUL PLANET RYLOS!
MORE EXPLICITLY, ON THE SUPPOSEDLY-SECRET STARFIGHTER CLIFF FACE COMMAND BASE.
LASER-DEFENSE GUNS BLAST AWAY, SHATTERING SOME OF THE SPACE-FLUNG STONES...
...BUT ARE UNABLE TO HALT THE REST OF THE METEOR RAIN WHICH CRUSHES THE STUNNED STARFIGHTERS BEFORE THEY CAN EVEN ATTAIN THEIR DOCKED GUNSTAR SHIPS.
THEN, AS THE SCREAMS WITHIN THE CLIFF FACE COMMAND BASE FADE AWAY, THE LASER-DEFENSE GUNS GO SILENT.
IN ONE FOUL SWOOP, ALL RESISTANCE ON RYLOS HAS BEEN ELIMINATED.

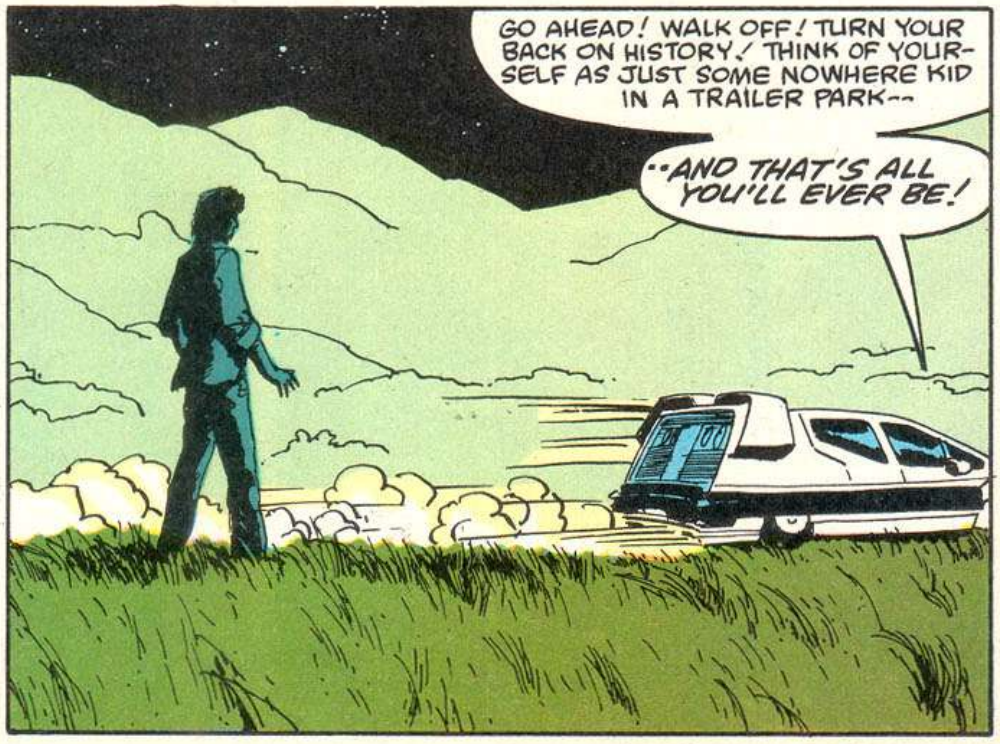

DIRECT HIT, COMMANDER!

AT LAST! IT IS DONE! SOON THE FRONTIER WILL BE DOWN AND THE ACCURSED RYLANS WILL BOW TO THEIR NEW EMPEROR...OR I WILL DARKEN THE SKIES WITH THEIR ASHES!
COMMANDER, OUR REPORTS INDICATE THAT ONE STAR-FIGHTER MAY HAVE...ESCAPED!
ESCAPED??!

MEANWHILE, ON EARTH...
CENTAURI, ARE... ARE YOU SURE THAT I CAN'T GIVE YOU A HAND?
YOU'VE DONE QUITE ENOUGH ALREADY, THANK YOU!
WELL, OKAY, THEN. ER... 'BYE, CENTAURI!

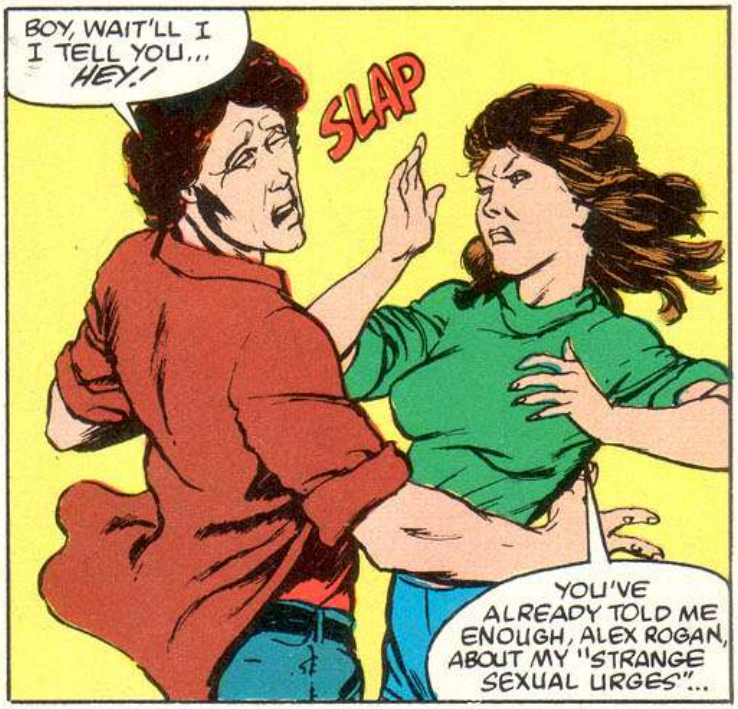
ALEX, WAIT! HERE! TAKE THIS COMMUNO-CRYSTAL! IT'S A SECOND CHANCE... SHOULD YOU CHANGE YOUR MIND!
I... LISTEN, CENTAURI, I WON'T BE GOING BACK TO RYLOS WITH YOU, SO I WON'T NEED THE CRYSTAL.

TAKE IT ANYWAY!
BUT I'M NO WARRIOR, CENTAURI! I-I'M JUST A KID FROM A TRAILER PARK, AND...


GO AHEAD! WALK OFF! TURN YOUR BACK ON HISTORY! THINK OF YOURSELF AS JUST SOME NOWHERE KID IN A TRAILER PARK--
..AND THAT'S ALL YOU'LL EVER BE!

A GREAT SADNESS WELLS UP IN ALEX AS HE FACES THE FUTURE HE'S CHOSEN FOR HIMSELF...
...WHILE TURNING HIS BACK ON THE STARS.

BUT THEN...
HEY, MAGGIE!


BOY, WAIT'LL I I TELL YOU... HEY!
SLAP
YOU'VE ALREADY TOLD ME ENOUGH, ALEX ROGAN, ABOUT MY "STRANGE SEXUAL URGES"...

...THAT I DON'T THINK I EVER WANT TO TALK TO YOU AGAIN!
HUH?

CONFUSED BY HIS GIRLFRIEND'S STRANGE BEHAVIOR, ALEX HEADS FOR HIS OWN TRAILER AND THE COMFORT OF HIS ORDERLY ROOM. BUT ORDER, IT SEEMS, HAS GIVEN WAY TO... CHAOS.
WHAT THE...?! LOUIS! I'M GONNA KILL MY LITTLE BROTHER AFTER I GET SOME SLEEP!

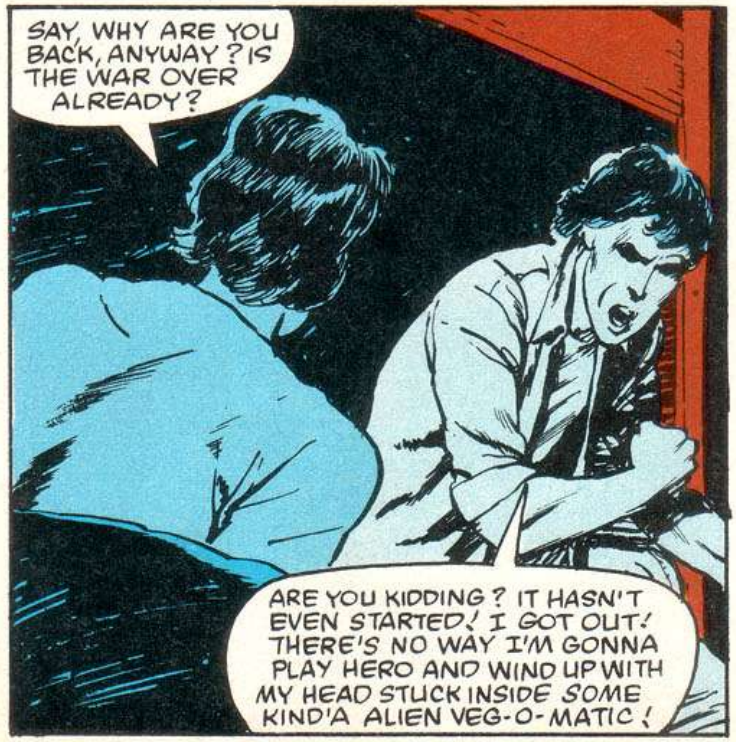
ALEX SITS DOWN ON HIS BUNK TO PREPARE FOR SLEEP WHEN HE NOTICES...
HEY! SOMEBODY'S BEEN SLEEPING IN MY BED...

AND THAT SOMEBODY IS ME?!!
SSSHHH! YOU WANNA WAKE LOUIS? I'M THE BETA UNIT!

WHAT'S A BETA UNIT?
A SIMULOID! AN EXACT DUPLICATE OF YOU... ONLY NOT AS LOUD! I WAS IN THE STARCAR WHEN YOU MET CENTAURI, REMEMBER? WE SHOOK HANDS, A SPARK PASSED BETWEEN US...

...AND I BECAME YOU SO THAT YOUR LIFE HERE ON EARTH WOULD GO ON AS USUAL WHILE YOU WERE OFF DEFEATING THE KO-DAN AS A STARFIGHTER!
LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT. YOU'RE A ROBOT? OF ME?!
WELL, ACTUALLY, I PREFER TO THINK OF MYSELF AS A STATE-OF-THE-ART, TOP-OF-THE-LINE --

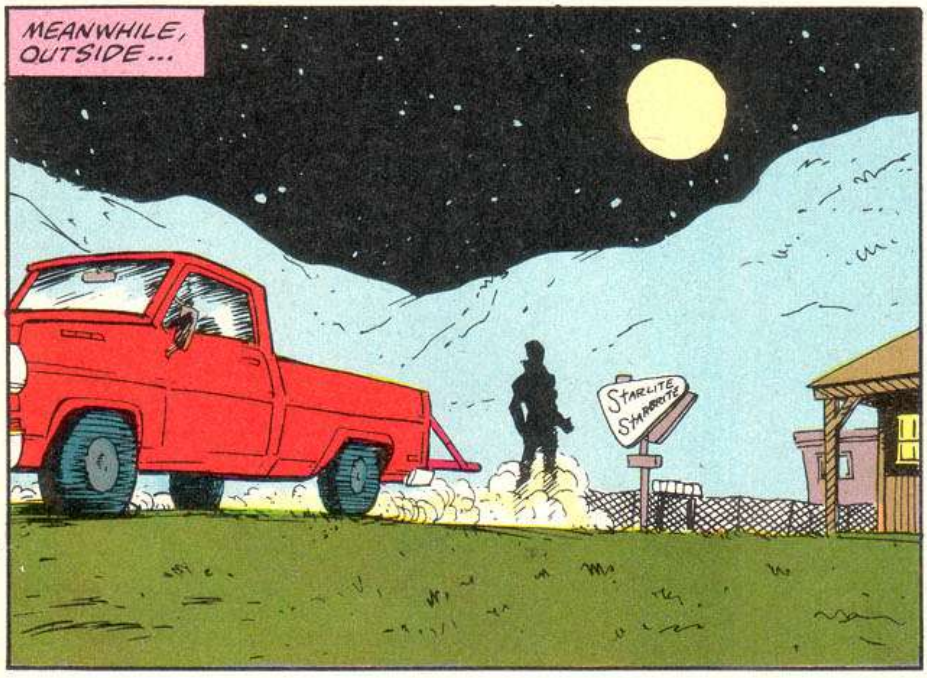
DO TO HER?! LISTEN, WE WERE SITTING OUTSIDE, LOOKING UP AT THE STARS WHEN SUDDENLY SHE STUCK HER TONGUE IN MY EAR! NEARLY SHORTED ME OUT, I'LL TELL YOU! SO I SCREAMED...
WHAT'D YOU DO TO MY GIRL? MAGGIE?
OH, GREAT.


SAY, WHY ARE YOU BACK, ANYWAY? IS THE WAR OVER ALREADY?
ARE YOU KIDDING? IT HASN'T EVEN STARTED! I GOT OUT! THERE'S NO WAY I'M GONNA PLAY HERO AND WIND UP WITH MY HEAD STUCK INSIDE SOME KIND'A ALIEN VEG-O-MATIC!

YOU MEAN...YOU RAN OUT? AFTER ALL YOUR MOANING AND GROANING ABOUT MAKING SOMETHING OF YOURSELF, YOU PUNK OUT ON YOUR BIG CHANCE?
IT'S NOT MY FIGHT!
OH... SAVE THE WHALES, BUT NOT THE UNIVERSE, HUH?

HEY, ALEX! COULD YOU KEEP IT DOWN?

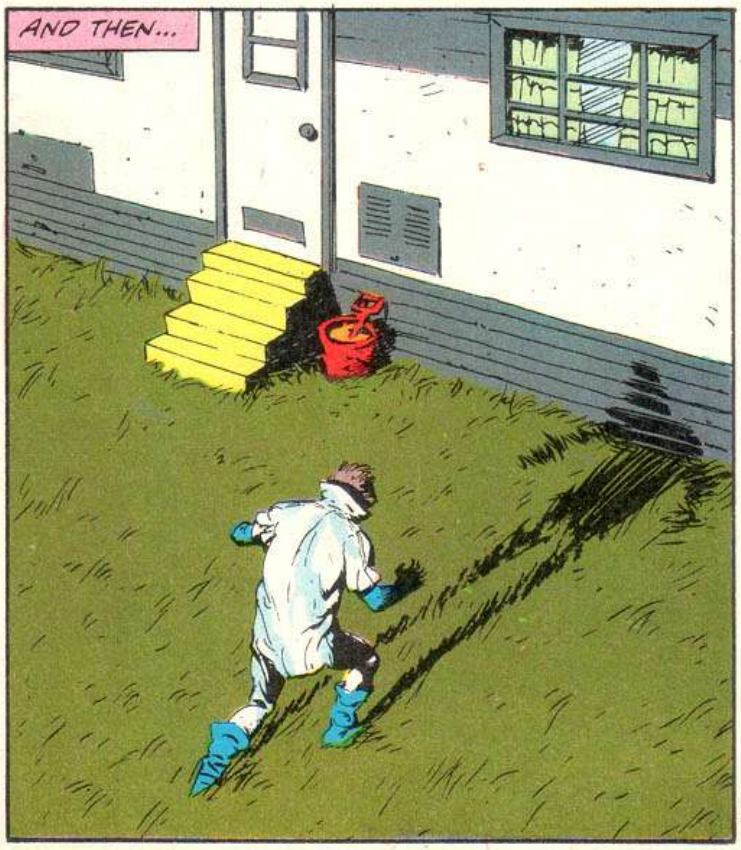
SORRY, LOUIS.


MEANWHILE, OUTSIDE...
STARLITE STARGRITE

AS THE MYSTERIOUS HITCHHIKER PASSES THE STARFIGHTER GAME...

...A STARTLING TRANSFORMATION...

...TAKES PLACE...


AND THEN...

YOU'RE GOING BACK TO RYLOS WITH CENTAURI... NOW!

MY WHOLE LIFE'S BEIN' TWISTED ALL AROUND...! HOW'S THIS STUPID "COMMUNO-CRYSTAL" WORK, ANYWAY?
JUST TALK INTO IT!

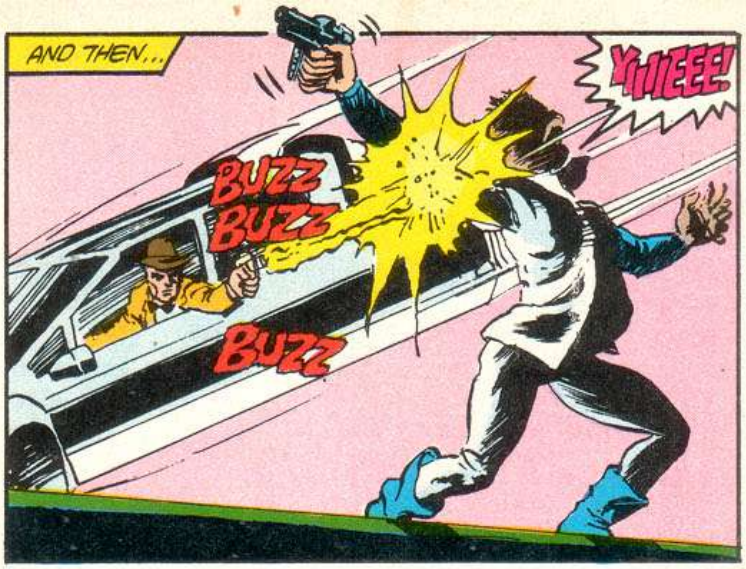
HEY, CENTAURI! COME IN! GET BACK HERE AND TAKE YOUR TINKER TOY OUT OF MY LIFE!

HELP!!!
ZREET
ZREET
REEOW

CENTAURI!
ZREET
ZREET
OH, NO! I CRUSHED THE COMMUNO-CRYSTAL!

THE CREATURE ON THE ROOF OF ALEX'S TRAILER TAKES CAREFUL AIM. THERE SEEMS NO WAY IT CAN MISS.
HEY, HITBEAST! LOOKING FOR ME?!

NYAAH-NYAAH! YOU'VE GOT TWO TARGETS, SLIMY! WHICH ONE ARE YOU GONNA CHOOSE?
FOR THE BRIEFEST OF SECONDS THE KO-DAN HITBEAST STANDS CONFUSED...


AND THEN...
YIIIEEE!
BUZZ
BUZZ
BUZZ

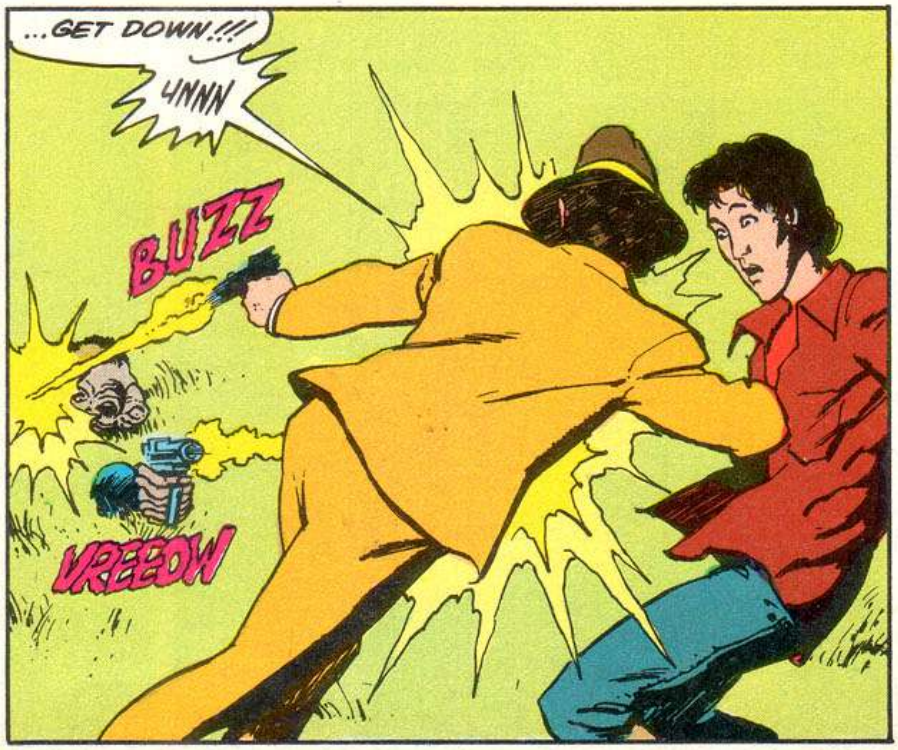
THUMP

WHEW! FOUL STENCH! DIRTY CREATURES! GET A GOOD LOOK, ALEX--YOU CAN BET YOUR ASTEROIDS YOU'LL BE SEEING MORE OF THEM!
HUH? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

THIS IS A ZANDO-ZAN--AN INTERSTELLAR HIT-BEAST--COMPLIMENTS OF XUR!
XUR?! WHY IS HE SENDING ASSASSINS AFTER ME?!!

BECAUSE YOU'RE A THREAT TO HIM! RIGHT, BETA?
"RIGHT, CENTAURI! YOU SEE, YOU GOTTA GO BACK, ALEX! AT LEAST YOU'LL HAVE A FIGHTING CHANCE UP THERE! I'LL COVER FOR YOU HERE!"

THAT'S IT, ALEX. IT'S YOUR CHOICE. EITHER FIGHT, OR GET USED TO BEING A HELPLESS TAR...

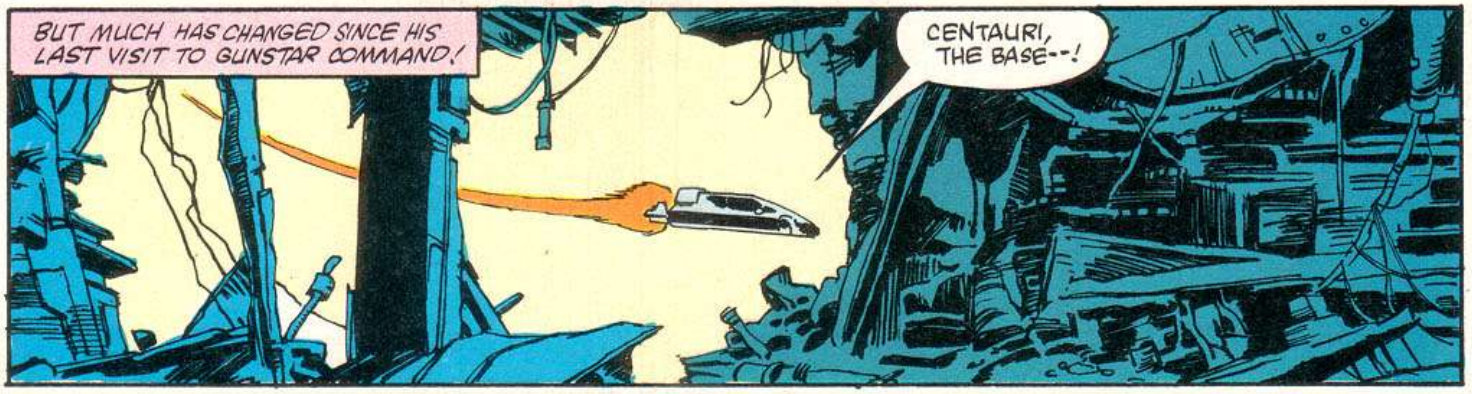

...GET DOWN!!!
UNNN
BUZZ
VREEOW

CENTAURI! BETA, GET A DOCTOR!
NO! NO NATIVE CURES OR WITCH DOCTORS! I'M FINE! JUST A SCRATCH...

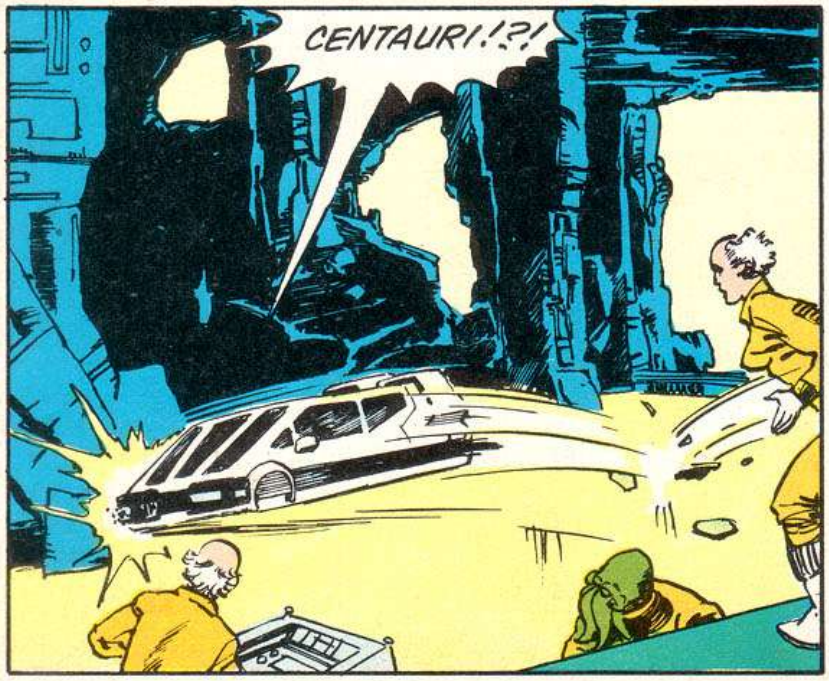
FACE IT, ALEX! YOU'RE A BORN STARFIGHTER! IT'S IN YOUR BLOOD!

OKAY! LET'S GO, CENTAURI!

THUS, LEAVING THE BETA UNIT BACK ON EARTH TO TAKE HIS PLACE, ALEX ONCE MORE BOARDS THE STARCAR FOR ITS INTERSTELLAR RIDE TO RYLOS!

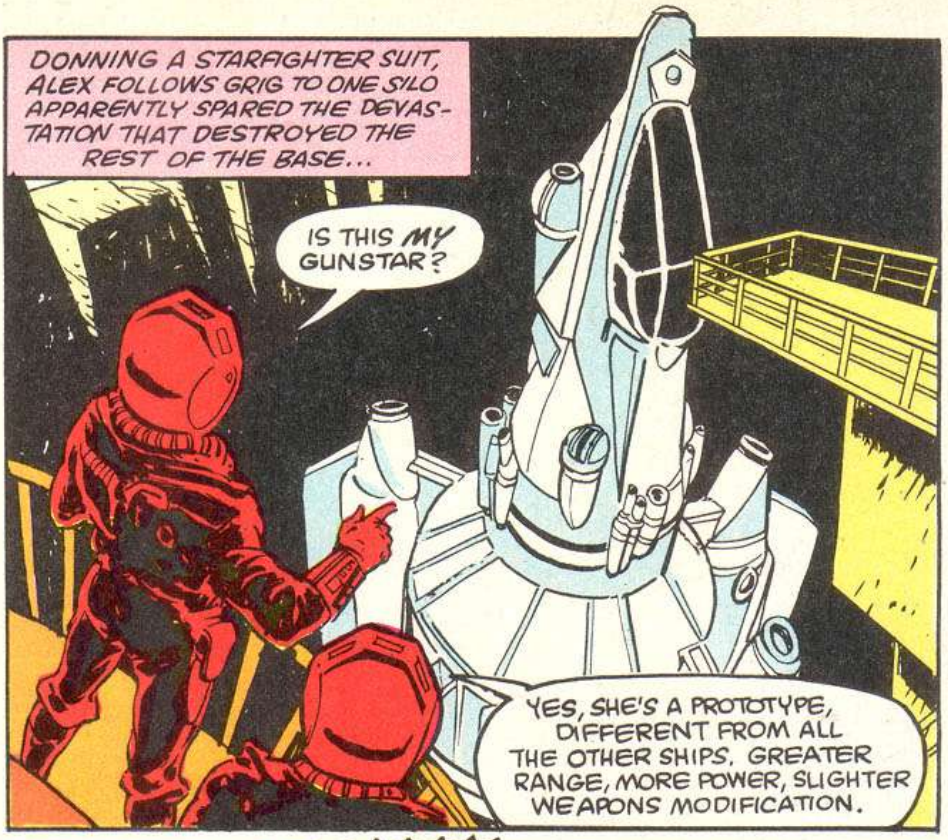

BUT MUCH HAS CHANGED SINCE HIS LAST VISIT TO GUNSTAR COMMAND!
CENTAURI, THE BASE--!

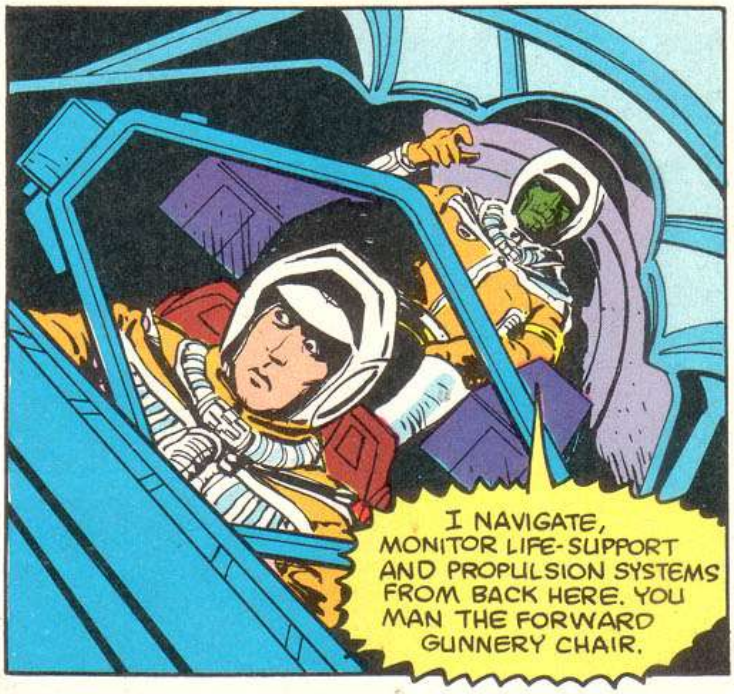
CENTAURI?
JUST A SCRATCH!

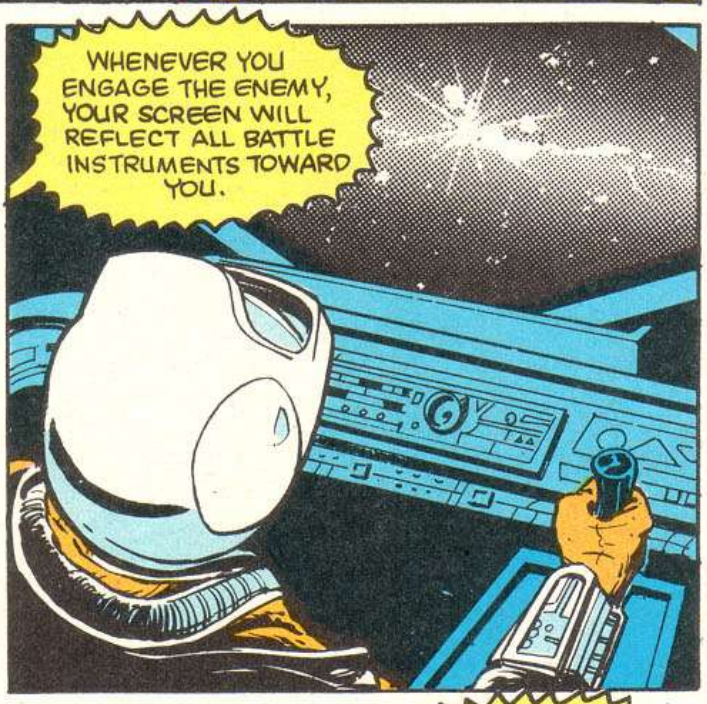

CENTAURI!?!

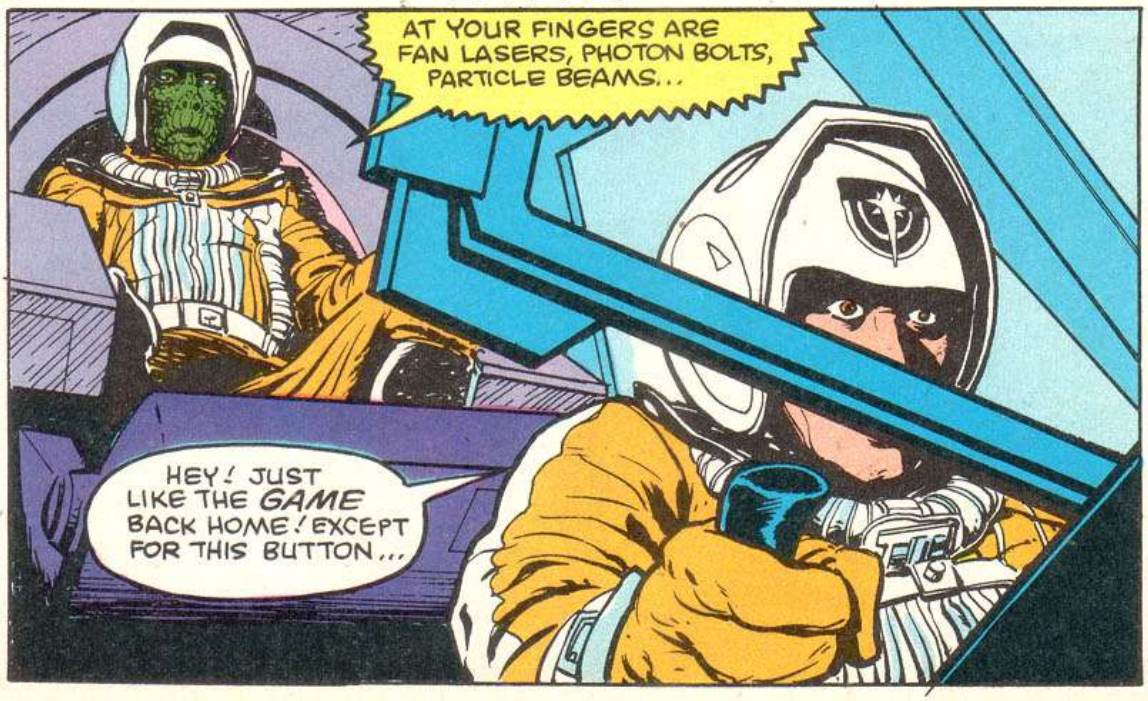
THE RYLANS REMAINING IN THE DEVASTATED BASE GATHER 'ROUND TO HELP THE WOUNDED CENTAURI FROM THE STARCAR, AND AMONG THEM ALEX SEES...
GRIG!
YOU SEE? YOU SEE? CENTAURI BROUGHT THE YOUNG STARFIGHTER BACK...!
YES, I SEE. DON'T TALK. REST.
ALEX, DOES HE HAVE MY MONEY-- THE RECRUITMENT BOUNTY?
I HAVE A FORTUNE FOR YOU, CENTAURI. NOW, PLEASE BE STILL.
HE'S NOT FIBBING, IS HE, ALEX? I'VE KNOWN HIM AWHILE AND...
NO, CENTAURI, IT-IT'S ALL HERE! PILES AND PILES OF IT! ALL FOR YOU!
AHHH, AT LAST! ALEX, I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT IT WAS FOR THE GREATEST GOOD THAT I BROUGHT YOU BACK TO RYLOS! OF COURSE--
--IT NEVER HURTS TO BE RICHHHH...
'TIL THE NEXT DIMENSION, OLD FRIEND.
WE'VE NO TIME FOR MOURNING, ALEX! THE FRONTIER COULD COLLAPSE AT ANY MOMENT! COME ALONG, COME ALONG!
ONLY NOW DOES ALEX RECOVER FROM HIS OWN SHOCK AND BEGIN TO COME TO TERMS WITH THE DESTRUCTION THAT'S BEFALLEN THE GUNSTAR COMMAND BASE.
THE KO-DAN ATTACKED. OUR DEFENSES WERE SABOTAGED BY A XURAN AGENT. WE WERE HELPLESS. YOU'VE COME BACK NONE TOO SOON. ALEX... ARE YOU WITH US??

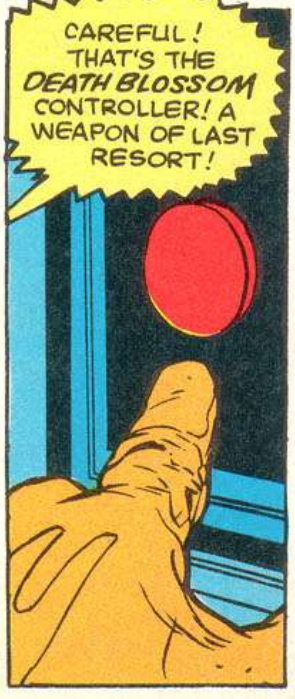
YEAH, I'LL FIGHT.
INTERSTELLAR, MY BOY! INTERSTELLAR!
AND THE FACT THAT XUR STILL THINKS THAT YOU ARE ON EARTH--THANKS TO THE BETA UNIT--THEORETICALLY WORKS TO OUR ADVANTAGE.!


DONNING A STARFIGHTER SUIT, ALEX FOLLOWS GRIG TO ONE SILO APPARENTLY SPARED THE DEVASTATION THAT DESTROYED THE REST OF THE BASE...
IS THIS MY GUNSTAR?
YES, SHE'S A PROTOTYPE, DIFFERENT FROM ALL THE OTHER SHIPS. GREATER RANGE, MORE POWER, SLIGHTER WEAPONS MODIFICATION.


I NAVIGATE, MONITOR LIFE-SUPPORT AND PROPULSION SYSTEMS FROM BACK HERE. YOU MAN THE FORWARD GUNNERY CHAIR.


WHENEVER YOU ENGAGE THE ENEMY, YOUR SCREEN WILL REFLECT ALL BATTLE INSTRUMENTS TOWARD YOU.


AT YOUR FINGERS ARE FAN LASERS, PHOTON BOLTS, PARTICLE BEAMS...
HEY! JUST LIKE THE GAME BACK HOME! EXCEPT FOR THIS BUTTON...


CAREFUL! THAT'S THE DEATH BLOSSOM CONTROLLER! A WEAPON OF LAST RESORT!

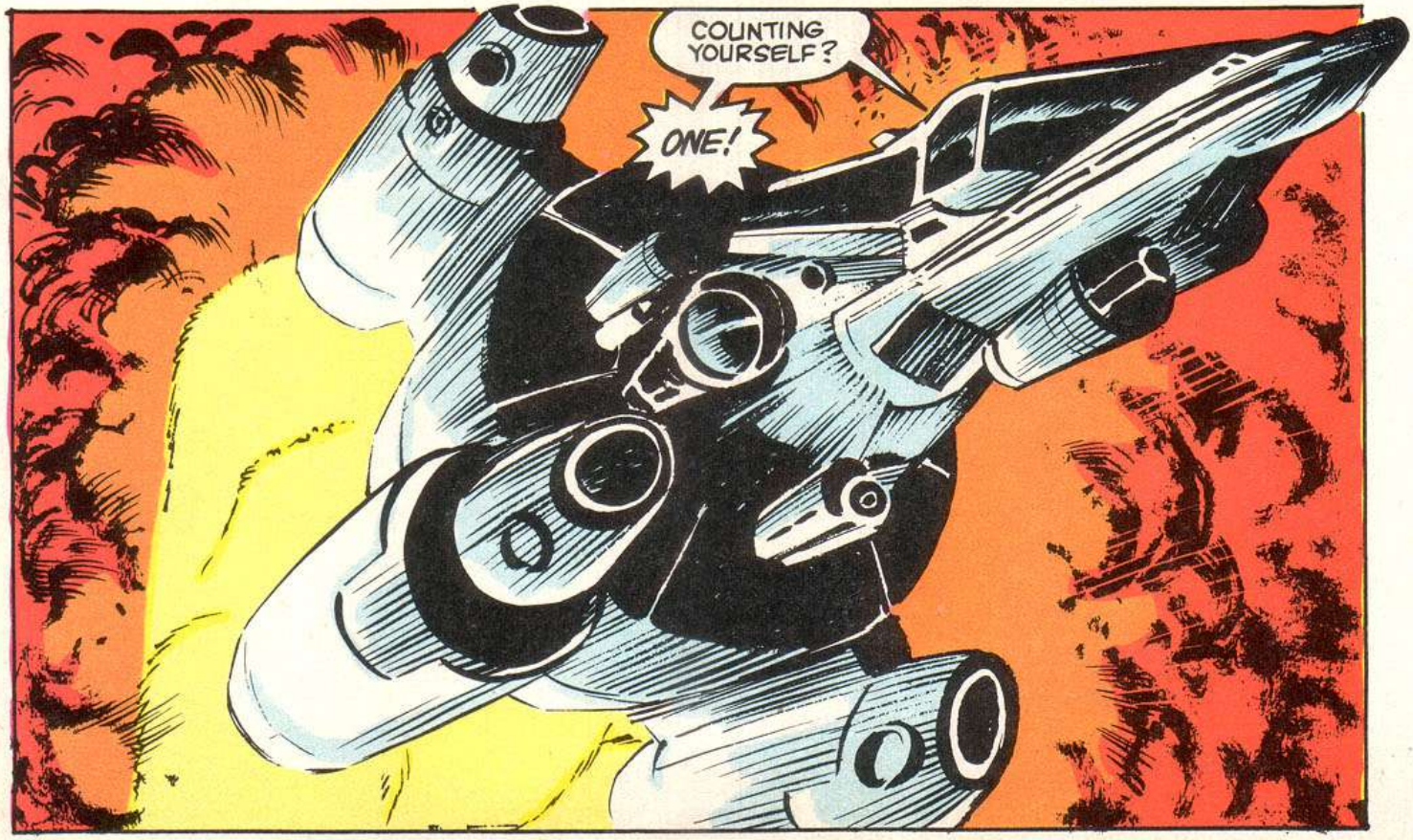
LUCKILY, ALEX, I WAS JUST GOING OVER THIS SHIP WHEN THE REST OF THE HANGAR WENT UP!
HUH? WHEN DID THE HANGAR GO UP?
AND WHERE WERE THE REST OF THE STARFIGHTERS??

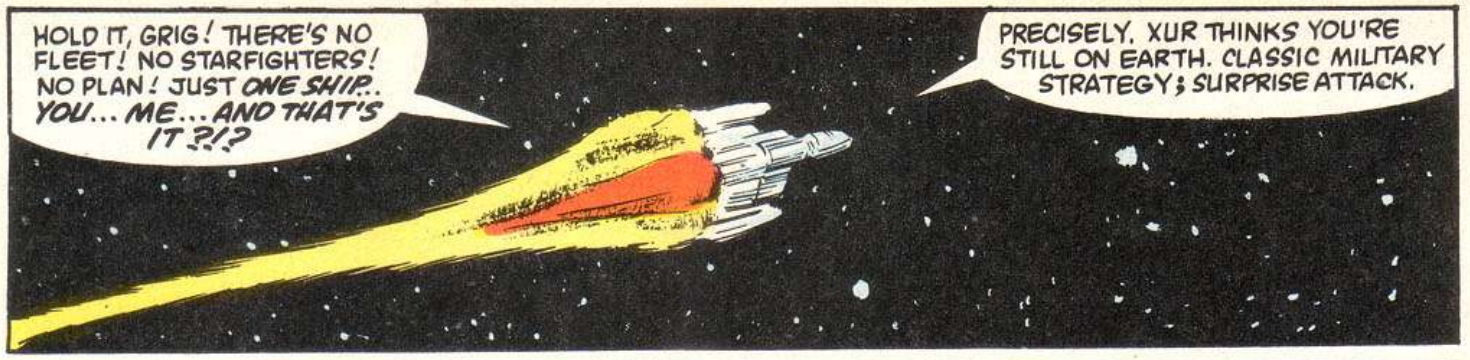
IN THE HANGAR.

YOU MEAN, THEY'RE DEAD?!

DEATH IS A PRIMITIVE CONCEPT. I PREFER TO THINK OF THEM AS BRAVELY BATTLING EVIL IN ANOTHER DIMENSION.

"IN ANOTHER DIMENSION?" HOW MANY ARE LEFT?


COUNTING YOURSELF?
ONE!


HOLD IT, GRIG! THERE'S NO FLEET! NO STARFIGHTERS! NO PLAN! JUST ONE SHIP.. YOU... ME... AND THAT'S IT ?!?
PRECISELY. XUR THINKS YOU'RE STILL ON EARTH. CLASSIC MILITARY STRATEGY; SURPRISE ATTACK.

IT'LL BE A SLAUGHTER!
THERE'S THE SPIRIT! ONE GUNSTAR AGAINST THE ARMADA! I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO FIGHT A DESPERATE BATTLE AGAINST INCREDIBLE ODDS! YES; IT WILL BE A SLAUGHTER, MY BOY!

I MEANT-- MY SLAUGHTER!

TARGET LIGHTS, ALEX!
HUH? TARGET LIGHTS??

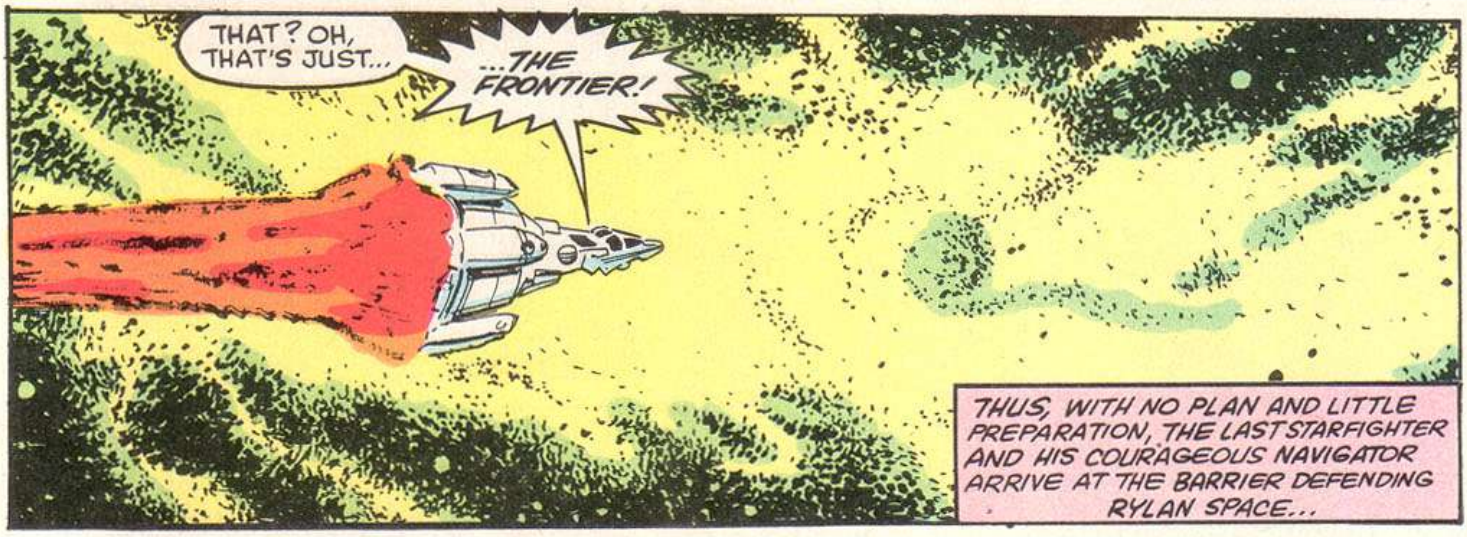
YES. THOUGHT YOU MIGHT WANT TO SQUEEZE OFF A FEW ROUNDS OF PRACTICE WHILE YOU HAVE THE CHANCE.
STEADY. TAKE YOUR TIME. LEAD YOUR TARGETS. RELAX.
SWELL! I'M ABOUT TO GET KILLED A MILLION MILES FROM HOME AND YOU TELL ME TO RELAX! WELL, HERE GOES...

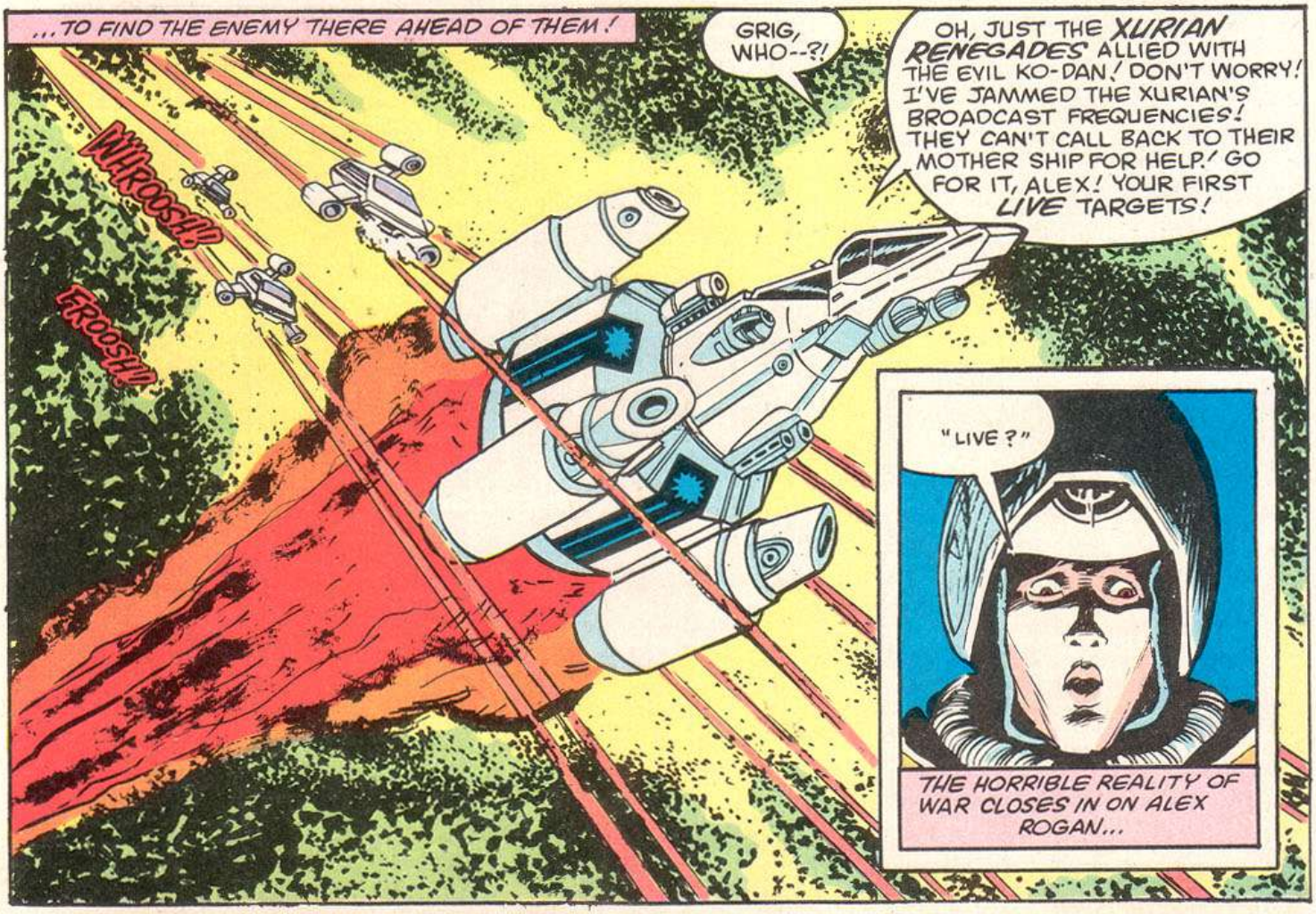
... NOTHING!!!
VREET
VREET
VREEOW
NOT A TARGET LIGHT REMAINS WHEN ALEX STOPS FIRING. IN THE GAME, IT WOULD HAVE MEANT AN INCREDIBLE SCORE.
HERE IN SPACE, THE LAST STARFIGHTER'S SKILL MAY SPELL THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LIFE... AND DEATH!

MEANWHILE, BACK ON EARTH...
WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU, ALEX? YOU FORGET HOW TO FIX THINGS?
ER, WELL, THAT IS, I...
HI, ALEX!
YOWWW! OH, MAGGIE! IT'S YOU!
ALEX, WHY DON'T WE GO UP TO SILVER LAKE TONIGHT...
"... TOGETHER?"
AND, BACK IN DEEPEST SPACE...
... THE WAY I FIGURE IT, ALEX, THE ARMADA WILL ATTEMPT TO BREAK THROUGH THE FRONTIER HERE, AND REACH RYLOS IN TWENTY CLICKS. SQUADRONS OF DECK FIGHTERS WILL PRECEDE THE MOTHER SHIP...
SQUADRONS? HOW MANY SQUADRONS?
OH, IT'S NOT THE NUMBER OF SQUADRONS WHICH CONCERNS ME...

...BUT THIS CONTROL TURRET SENDS OUT THE COMMANDS TO THE DECK FIGHTERS, ENABLING THEM TO ACT AS ONE DURING A FIGHT.
THEN, DESTROY THE CONTROL TURRET--
-- AND ATTACK THE DECK FIGHTERS WHILE THERE'S CONFUSION IN THEIR RANKS! EXCELLENT, ALEX!

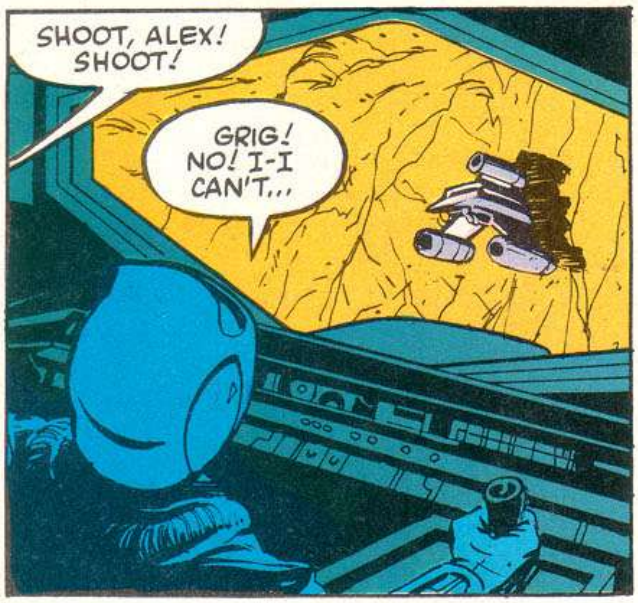
WAIT A SECOND! WE GOTTA GET THROUGH THE FIGHTERS TO GET TO THE TURRET!
WE'RE DEAD!
I'LL HAVE A PLAN ALL FIGURED OUT BY THE TIME WE REACH THE FRONTIER.
HEY, GRIG? WHAT'S THAT IN FRONT OF US?


THAT? OH, THAT'S JUST...
...THE FRONTIER!
THUS, WITH NO PLAN AND LITTLE PREPARATION, THE LAST STARFIGHTER AND HIS COURAGEOUS NAVIGATOR ARRIVE AT THE BARRIER DEFENDING RYLAN SPACE...


...TO FIND THE ENEMY THERE AHEAD OF THEM!
GRIG, WHO--?!
OH, JUST THE XURIAN RENEGADES ALLIED WITH THE EVIL KO-DAN! DON'T WORRY! I'VE JAMMED THE XURIAN'S BROADCAST FREQUENCIES! THEY CAN'T CALL BACK TO THEIR MOTHER SHIP FOR HELP! GO FOR IT, ALEX! YOUR FIRST LIVE TARGETS!
WHROOSH!
FROOSH!
"LIVE?"
THE HORRIBLE REALITY OF WAR CLOSES IN ON ALEX ROGAN...

...EVEN AS THE GUNSTAR CLOSES IN ON THE ISOLATED XURIAN FIGHTERS.
HAH! THE XURIANS WEREN'T EXPECTING ANY GUNSTARS, ALEX! WE'VE GOT THEM, BOY! THREE CLICKS TO KILL ZONE!
UH, GRIG, I DON'T THINK I CAN...
FIRE WHEN READY, ALEX!

GRIG, I'M TRYING TO TELL YOU THAT...
FIRE, ALEX!


SHOOT, ALEX! SHOOT!
GRIG! NO! I-I CAN'T...

BUT THE XURIAN SHIP HAS NO SUCH COMPUNCTIONS REGARDING THE APPROACHING GUNSTAR.

VREEOW
ACTING INSTINCTIVELY, ALEX LUNGES AT THE GUNSTAR'S GUNNERY CONTROLS!

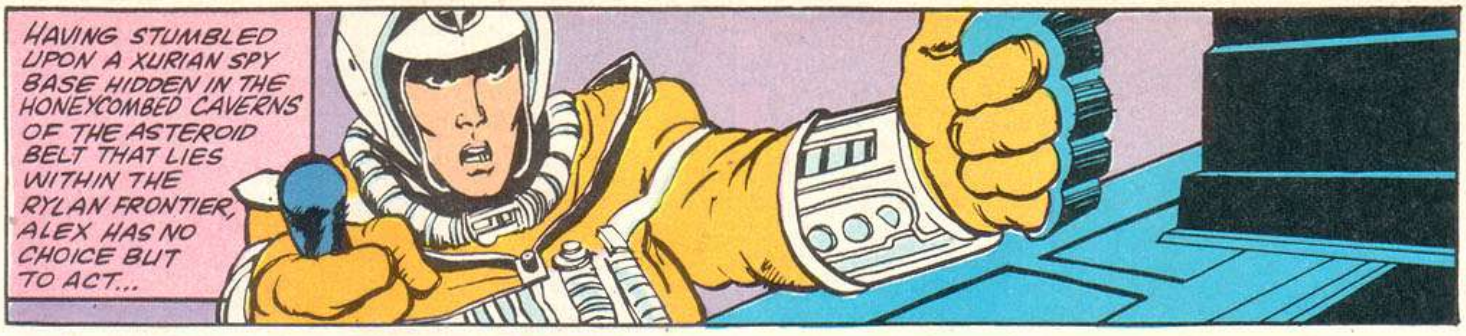
YOU DID IT, ALEX! YOU DID IT!!
VREET
VASHTROOM!

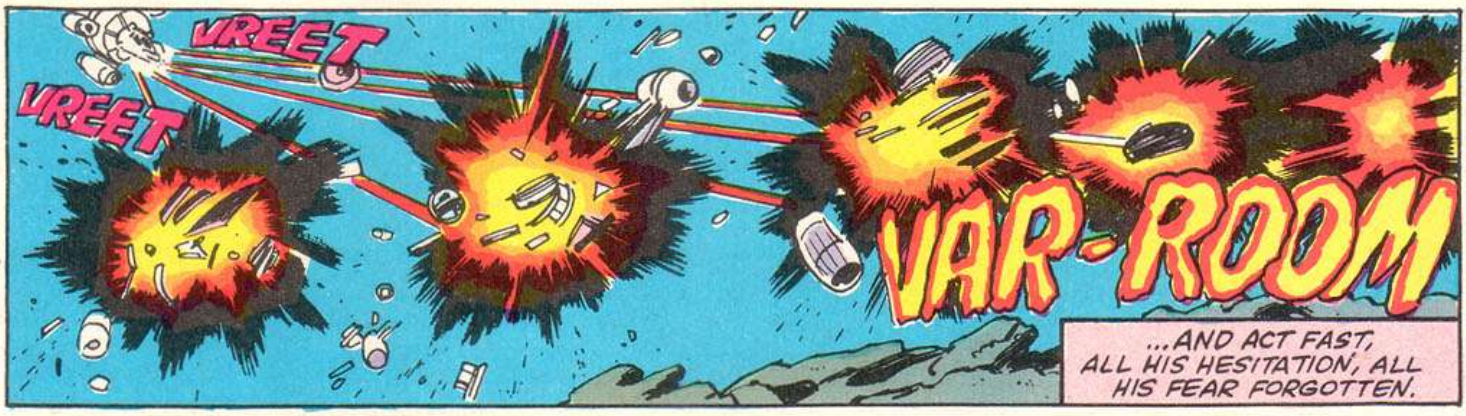
WELL, WHAT IF *WE* WERE TO HIDE HERE--INSIDE THIS ASTEROID--LET THE ARMADA PASS BY AND THEN HIT THEM FROM BEHIND?

AN EXCELLENT PLAN, ALEX! ONE WHICH MIGHT ACTUALLY HAVE WORKED...

...WHAT A PITY THERE ARE *NO STARFIGHTERS* LEFT TO CARRY IT OUT!

VREET
VREET
VREEOW
WELL, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN A WONDERFUL PLAN... IF THE XURIAN RENEGADES HADN'T THOUGHT OF IT FIRST!

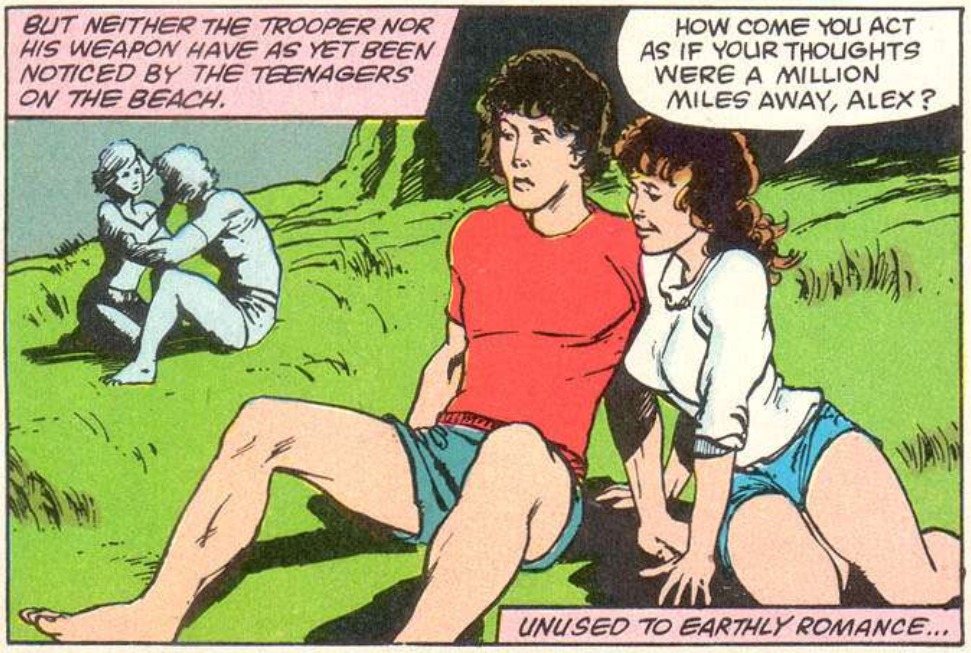

HAVING STUMBLED UPON A XURIAN SPY BASE HIDDEN IN THE HONEYCOMBED CAVERNS OF THE ASTEROID BELT THAT LIES WITHIN THE RYLAN FRONTIER, ALEX HAS NO CHOICE BUT TO ACT...


VREET
VREET
VAR-ROOM
...AND ACT FAST, ALL HIS HESITATION, ALL HIS FEAR FORGOTTEN.

ER, GRIG, MAYBE THERE IS ONE LAST STARFIGHTER LEFT, AFTER ALL!

COUNTLESS LIGHT YEARS AWAY, THE JUNE MOON SHEDS ITS SOFT LUMINESCENCE OVER THE LOVING COUPLES LYING ON THE BEACH AT SILVER LAKE... EVEN AS THE LIGHTS OF A ROVING PATROL CAR ILLUMINATE JACK BLAKE'S PICKUP TRUCK.

BUT THE EVIL ALIEN WEAPON CLUTCHED IN THE TROOPER'S HAND IS HARDLY STANDARD DEPARTMENT ISSUE!


BUT NEITHER THE TROOPER NOR HIS WEAPON HAVE AS YET BEEN NOTICED BY THE TEENAGERS ON THE BEACH.
HOW COME YOU ACT AS IF YOUR THOUGHTS WERE A MILLION MILES AWAY, ALEX?
UNUSED TO EARTHLY ROMANCE...

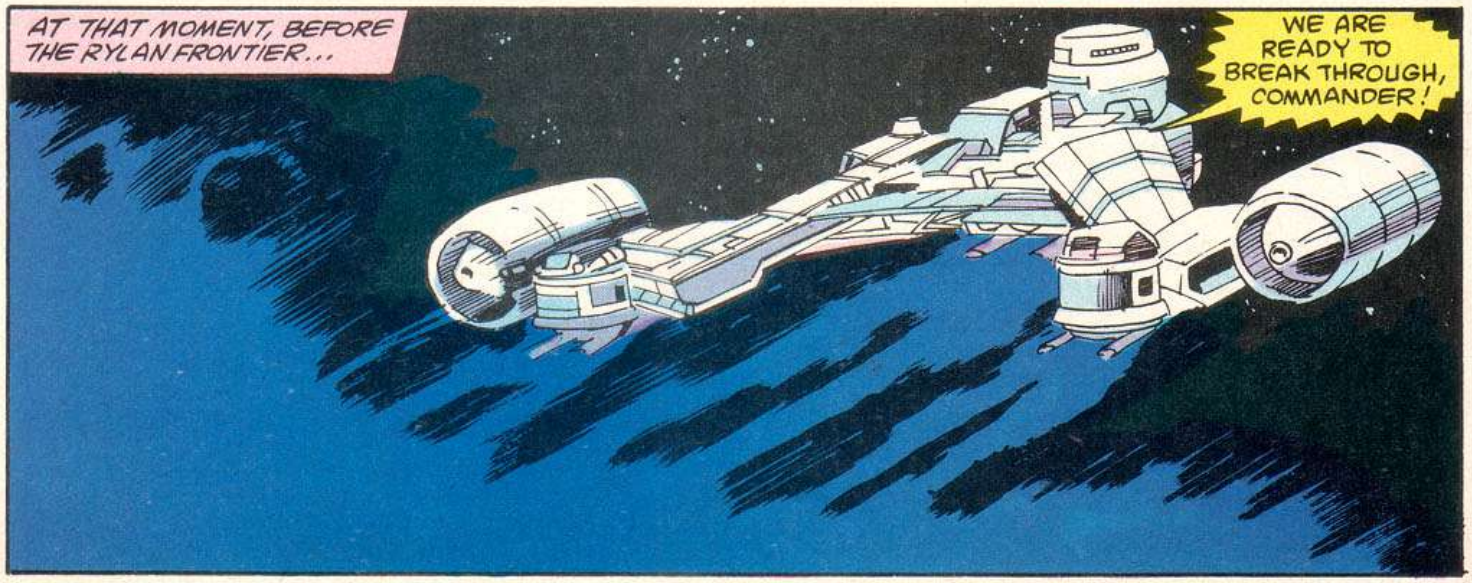
...THE BEFUDDLED BETA UNIT WHO HAS TAKEN ALEX ROGAN'S PLACE ON EARTH ATTEMPTS TO IMPROVISE BY STEALING CUES FROM ONE HE ASSUMES IS VERSED IN THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE.
ALL THOSE OTHER GIRLS MEANT NOTHING TO ME, DARLING! IT'S YOU I LOVE! YOU!
OH, JACK, TALK DIRTY TO ME!
ALL THOSE OTHER GIRLS MEANT NOTHING TO ME, DARLING! IT'S YOU I LOVE! YOU!
WAIT A MINUTE, ALEX ROGAN! WHAT "OTHER" GIRLS?
SHOULD I TALK DIRTY TO YOU, NOW?
DROP DEAD, ALEX ROGAN!
MAGGIE, WAIT--! OH, WHAT'S THE USE! I GIVE UP! LISTEN--! I'M NOT ALEX ROGAN!
WE HAD AN AGREEMENT, ALEX! NO DRUGS! WHAT ON EARTH--?!
AHHHHHH!
POLICE
GET DOWN, MAGGIE!
ZREET

SOMEONE SHOT AT US, AND-- OH, ALEX! YOU'RE SHOT!!
I'M NOT ALEX! I'M A BETA UNIT--AN EXACT DUPLICATE OF YOUR BOYFRIEND!
IT'S ALL RIGHT, ALEX! WE'LL CALL A DOCTOR!
I'M COVERING FOR HIM WHILE HE SAVES THE STAR LEAGUE FROM THE KO-DAN!

I DON'T NEED A DOCTOR, MAGGIE! I'M A ROBOT!

AND I'VE GOT TO STOP THAT HIT-BEAST BEFORE IT COMMUNICATES TO THE KO-DAN THAT ALEX ISN'T ON EARTH!
WAIT! ALEX--BETA--WHOEVER OR WHATEVER YOU ARE! I'M COMING WITH YOU!

ROGAN? ROGAN! SCRATCH MY PAINT JOB AND YOU'RE DEAD, CREEP!!!
VRROHRRRRR


AT THAT MOMENT, BEFORE THE RYLAN FRONTIER...
WE ARE READY TO BREAK THROUGH, COMMANDER!

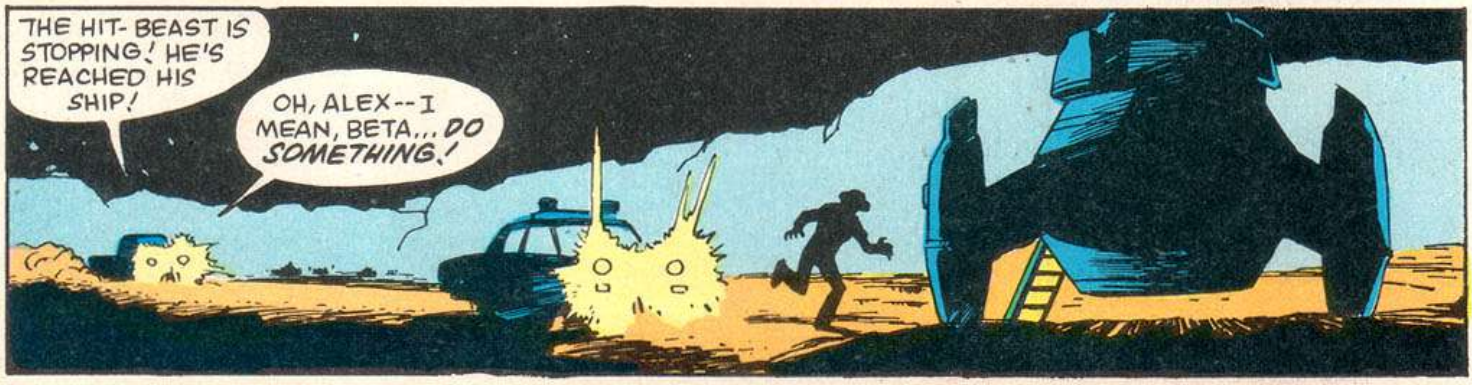
ON THE BRIDGE OF THE KO-DAN COMMAND SHIP...
ADMIRAL KRIL, THE XURIAN ADVANCE SHIPS HAVE NOT YET ANSWERED OUR INVASION CODE.
ALL SQUADRONS AHEAD--BUT AT HALF-SPEED, AND WITH ENERGY-PROBES ON.
WHAT? YOU WOULD DELAY?! FOOL! THE FRONTIER IS DOWN! THE MOON IS ECLIPSED! THE STARFIGHTERS ARE DEAD! THE ORDER IS FOR ME TO GIVE, AND I SAY...

INVADE!!!
WITH NO POWER LEFT ON RYLOS TO ENERGIZE IT, THE ONCE-FORMIDABLE FRONTIER FALLS BEFORE THE MASSIVE KO-DAN INVASION FORCE...

BUT THERE REMAINS ONE LAST STARFIGHTER WHO MUST FIND THE STRENGTH WITHIN HIMSELF TO STOP THEM!
HERE THEY COME, ALEX! READY?
READY, WILLING, AND ABLE, GRIG!
ALEX ROGAN'S MOMENT OF DESTINY DRAWS NEAR...

... BOTH ON RYLOS AND ON EARTH!
ALEX IS SOMEWHERE OUT IN SPACE? FOR REAL?

THAT'S WHAT I'VE BEEN TRYING TO TELL YOU! IF THE KO-DAN ARMADA LEARNS THAT ALEX ISN'T ON EARTH, HE'LL LOSE THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE!
THEN, WHAT ARE WE TALKING FOR? DRIVE!!


THE HIT-BEAST IS STOPPING! HE'S REACHED HIS SHIP!
OH, ALEX--I MEAN, BETA... DO SOMETHING!

WHEN I GIVE THE WORD, MAGGIE-- JUMP!
YOU OWE ME ONE, ALEX!

JUMP!!
VRORRRRRR

EXTERMINATION EMISSARY ZETA-SIX-ONE CALLING COMMANDER KRIL! MESSAGE: THE LAST STARFIGHTER...

BAVROOM

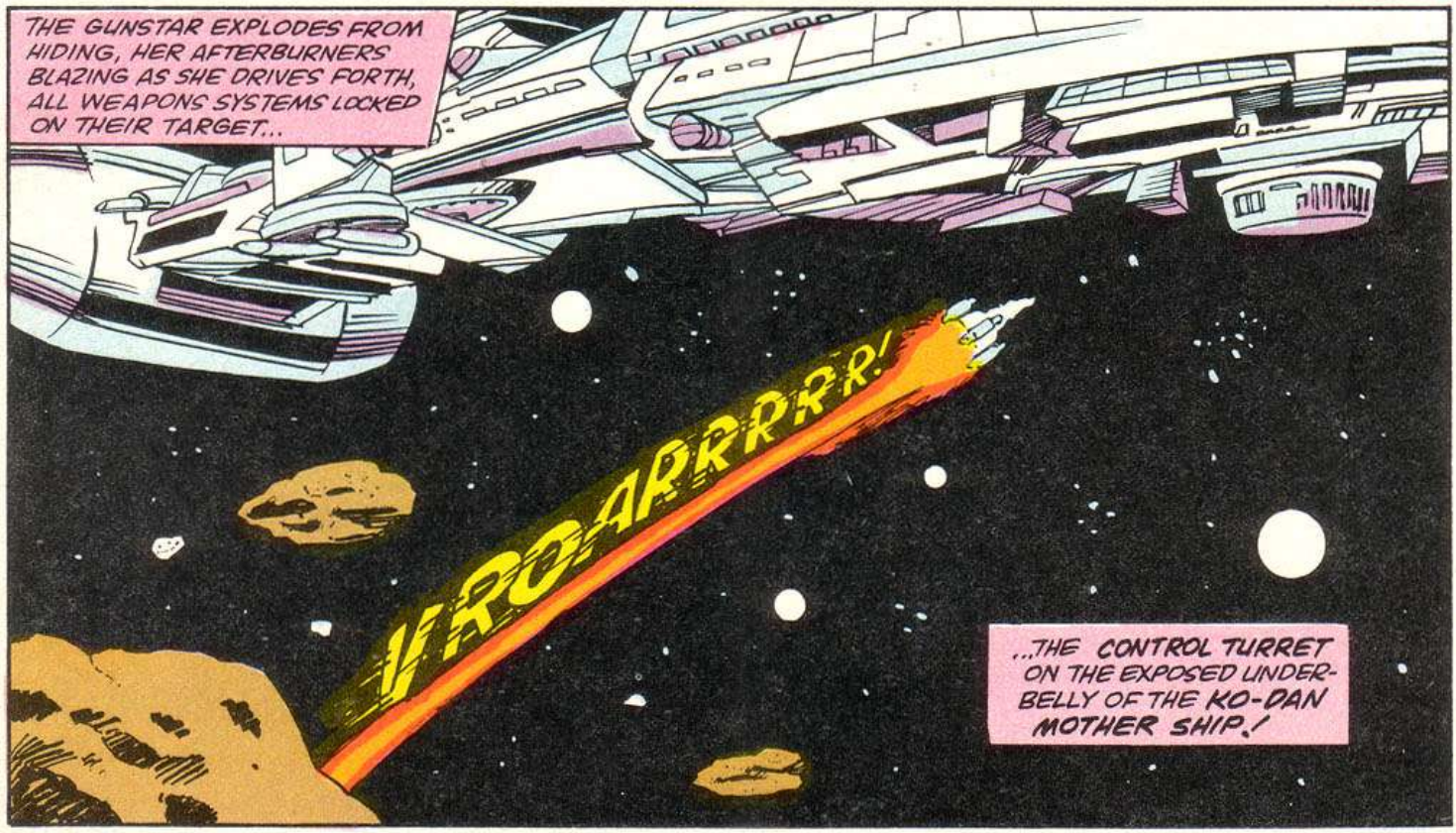
ALEX? OH, ALEX, WHERE ARE YOU?

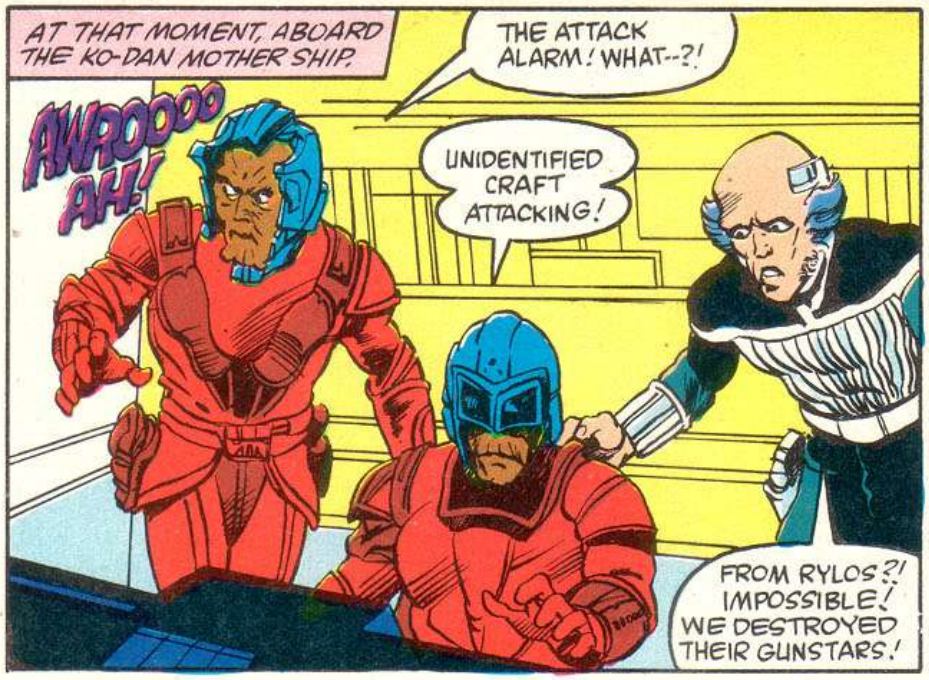
ABOARD THE KO-DAN MOTHER-SHIP...
THAT'S THE MESSAGE, ADMIRAL: "THE LAST STAR-FIGHTER..."
WHAT CAN IT MEAN?
DOLT! IT MEANS THAT THE LAST STARFIGHTER IS DEAD! NOTHING CAN STOP US NOW!
AHEAD FULL...TO RYLOS!!!

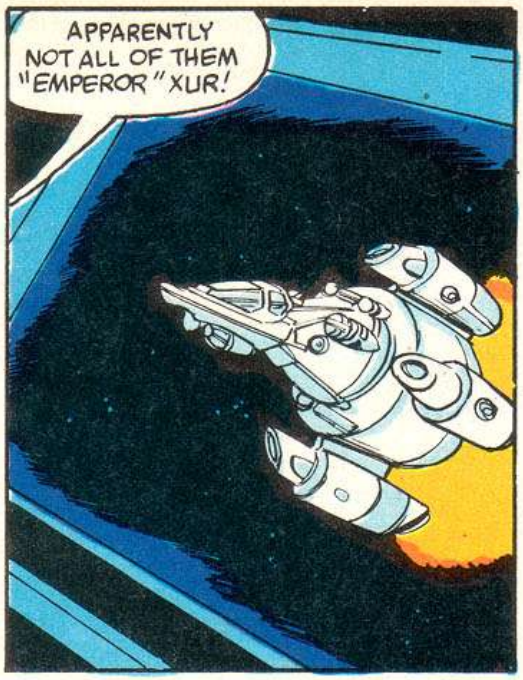
BUT, AS THE KO-DAN COMMAND SHIP ADVANCES...
THERE SHE IS, ALEX! THE KO-DAN MOTHER SHIP!
AND SEE--AT HER FAR END--THE CONTROL TURRET!

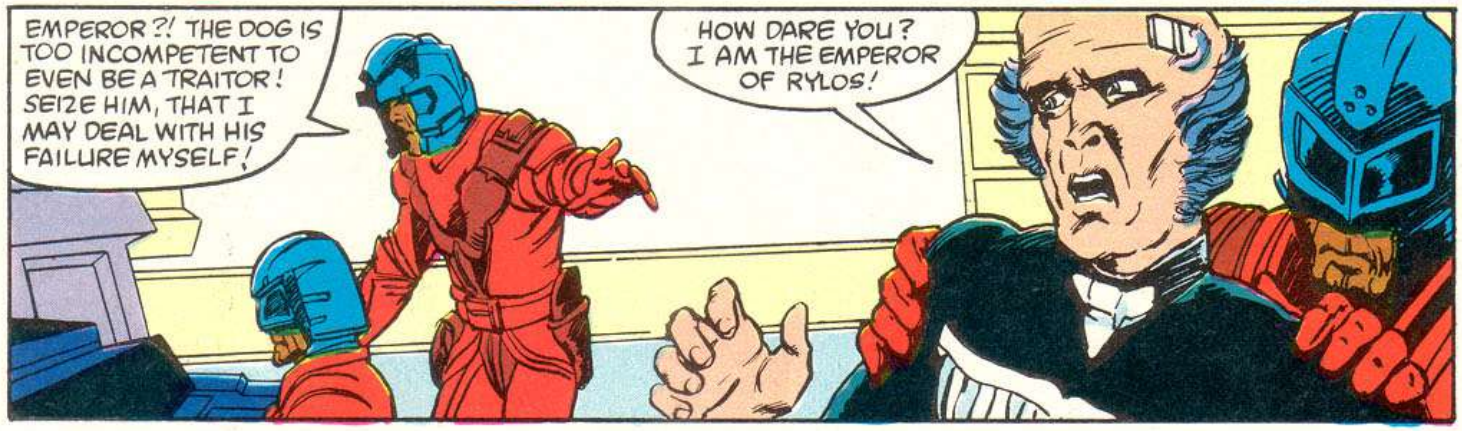
I SEE IT, GRIG! I'M READY! OH, ONE LAST THING...
WHAT'S THAT ALEX?

THANKS, GRIG... FOR EVERYTHING!
GOOD LUCK, STARFIGHTER!


THE GUNSTAR EXPLODES FROM HIDING, HER AFTERBURNERS BLAZING AS SHE DRIVES FORTH, ALL WEAPONS SYSTEMS LOCKED ON THEIR TARGET...
VROOAARRRRR!
...THE CONTROL TURRET ON THE EXPOSED UNDER-BELLY OF THE KO-DAN MOTHER SHIP!

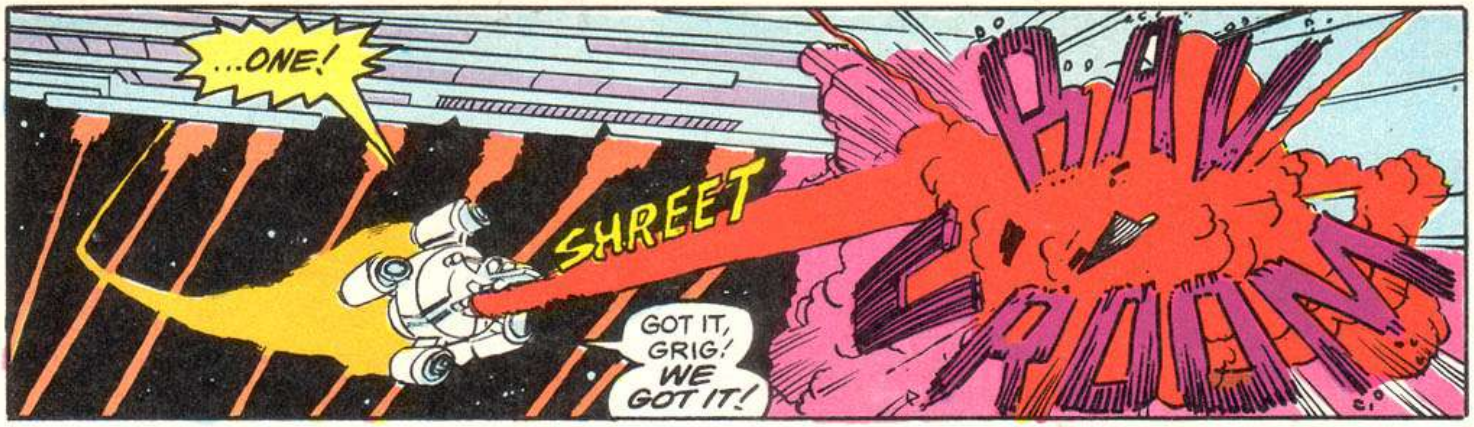

AT THAT MOMENT, ABOARD THE KO-DAN MOTHER SHIP.
THE ATTACK ALARM! WHAT--?!
AWROOOO AH!
UNIDENTIFIED CRAFT ATTACKING!
FROM RYLOS?! IMPOSSIBLE! WE DESTROYED THEIR GUNSTARS!

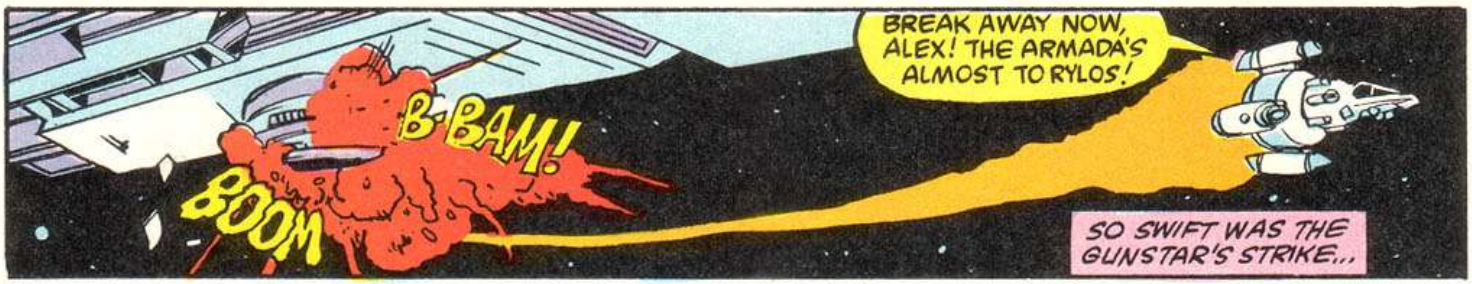

APPARENTLY NOT ALL OF THEM "EMPEROR" XUR!


EMPEROR?! THE DOG IS TOO INCOMPETENT TO EVEN BE A TRAITOR! SEIZE HIM, THAT I MAY DEAL WITH HIS FAILURE MYSELF!
HOW DARE YOU? I AM THE EMPEROR OF RYLOS!

AT ADMIRAL KRIL'S COMMAND, ALL GUNS OF THE KO-DAN MOTHER SHIP OPEN FIRE UPON THE APPROACHING GUNSTAR...
VREET
VREET
BUH-ROOOMM

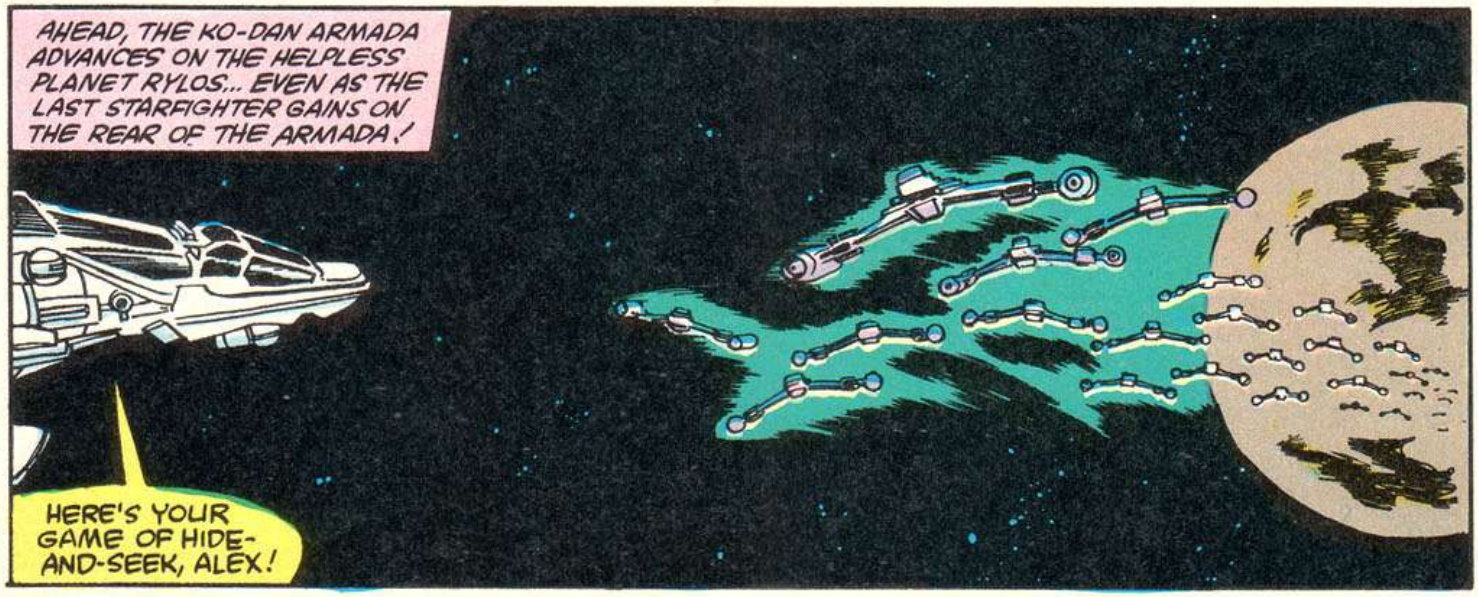
BUT, DESPITE THE DEADLY FIRE BEING RAINED DOWN UPON HIM, ALEX ROGAN-- STARFIGHTER-- DRIVES HIS GUNSTAR ON!
THREE CLICKS TO KILL ZONE, ALEX!
READY!
TWO CLICKS...


...ONE!
SHREET
GOT IT, GRIG! WE GOT IT!
BAM!
CRUNN

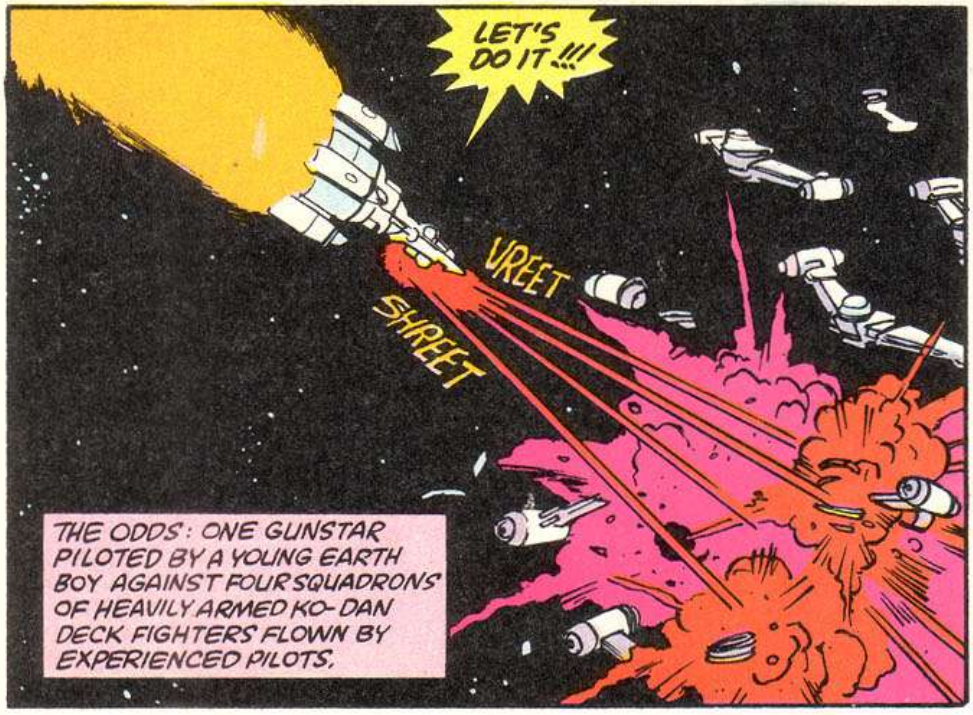

BOOM
B-BAM!
BREAK AWAY NOW, ALEX! THE ARMADA'S ALMOST TO RYLOS!
SO SWIFT WAS THE GUNSTAR'S STRIKE...

...THAT THE DAMAGE IS DONE BEFORE THE KO-DAN EVEN REALIZE ITS EXTENT!
COMMUNICATE WITH THE FLEET! TELL THEM TO DESTROY THAT GUNSTAR!
OUR COMMUNICATIONS CONTROL TURRET IS GONE, COMMANDER! THE ARMADA IS ISOLATED! AND I'VE JUST HAD A REPORT THAT XUR HAS ESCAPED!

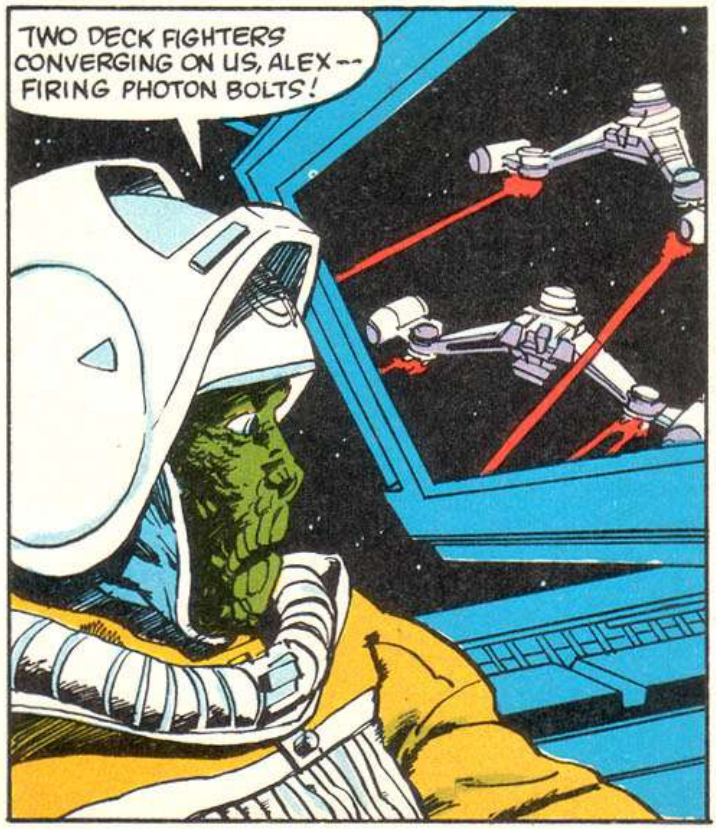
CURSE XUR! I WANT THAT STARFIGHTER!!


AHEAD, THE KO-DAN ARMADA ADVANCES ON THE HELPLESS PLANET RYLOS... EVEN AS THE LAST STARFIGHTER GAINS ON THE REAR OF THE ARMADA!
HERE'S YOUR GAME OF HIDE-AND-SEEK, ALEX!

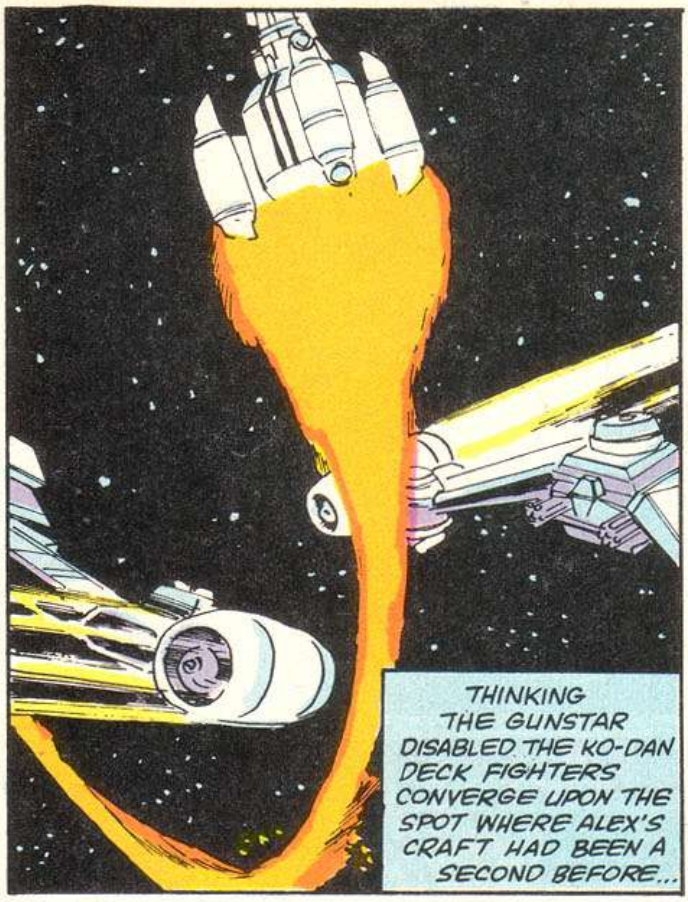
LIKE THE GAME SAID: I'VE BEEN RECRUITED BY THE STAR LEAGUE! TO DEFEND THE FRONTIER!
WELL, GRIG...


LET'S DO IT!!!
VREET
SHREET
THE ODDS: ONE GUNSTAR PILOTED BY A YOUNG EARTH BOY AGAINST FOUR SQUADRONS OF HEAVILY ARMED KO-DAN DECK FIGHTERS FLOWN BY EXPERIENCED PILOTS.

PUWHROOM


TWO DECK FIGHTERS CONVERGING ON US, ALEX -- FIRING PHOTON BOLTS!

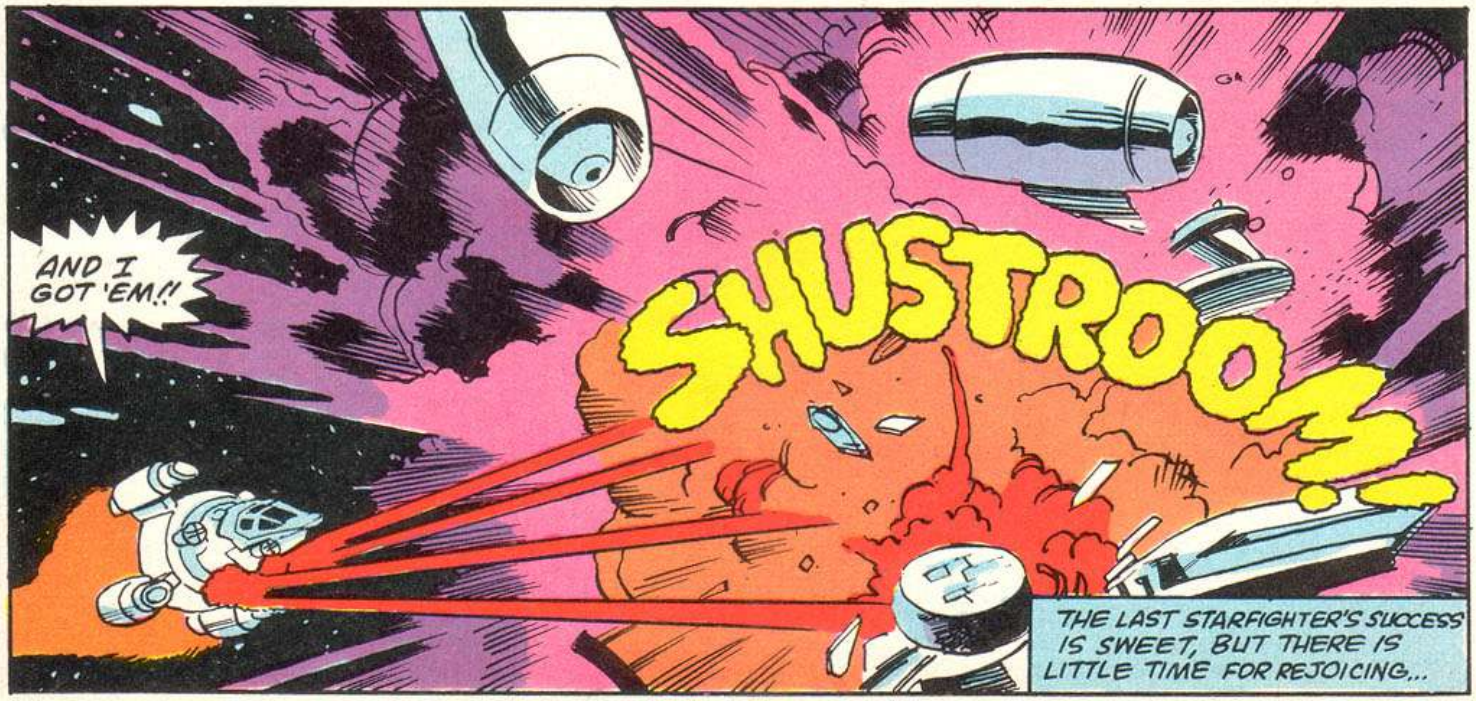
SHROOM
THEY GOT US, GRIG! WE'RE HIT!
I KNOW! WATCH THE HULL TEMPERATURE, BUT EVADE!


THINKING THE GUNSTAR DISABLED THE KO-DAN DECK FIGHTERS CONVERGE UPON THE SPOT WHERE ALEX'S CRAFT HAD BEEN A SECOND BEFORE...

...ONLY TO FIND THAT THEIR TARGET IS THERE NO LONGER!
BUVHROOM!

YAHOO! TWO MORE FOR THE GOOD GUYS!

SECTOR SIX, ALEX! THREE FIGHTERS ON A BOMBING RUN!
I SEE 'EM GRIG!


AND I GOT 'EM!!
SHUSTROO!!
THE LAST STARFIGHTER'S SUCCESS IS SWEET, BUT THERE IS LITTLE TIME FOR REJOICING...

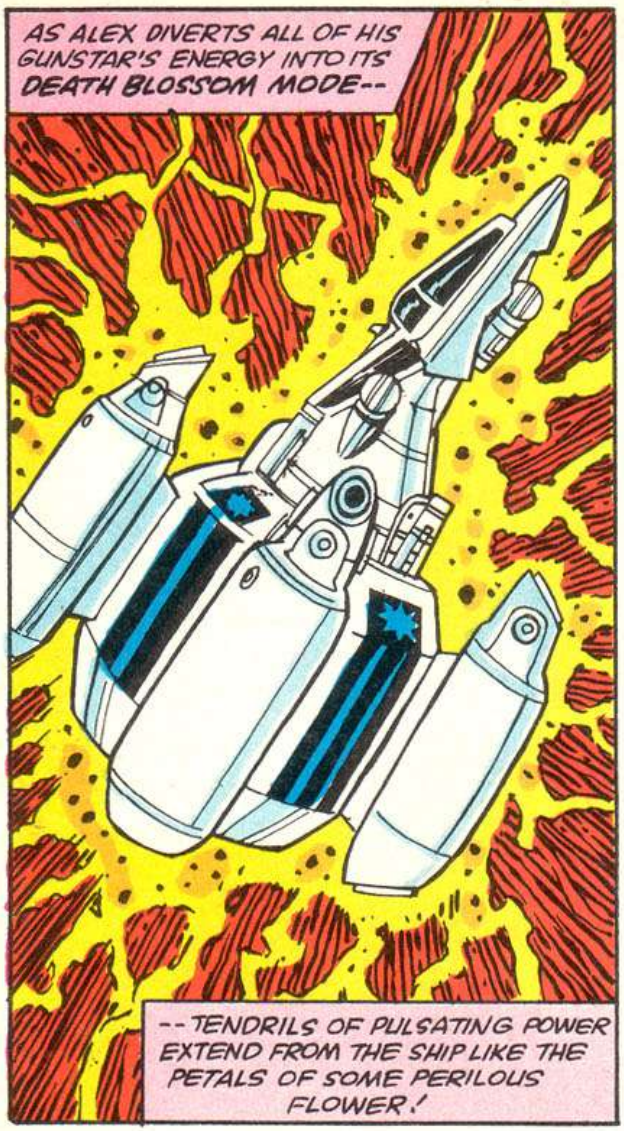
GRIG! THIS MANEUVER WASN'T IN THE GAME! WHAT--?!
CIRCLE OF DOOM, ALEX! BUT THE KO-DAN SHOULDN'T BE ABLE TO COORDINATE THEIR ACTIONS SO EXACTLY WITHOUT COMMANDING FROM...

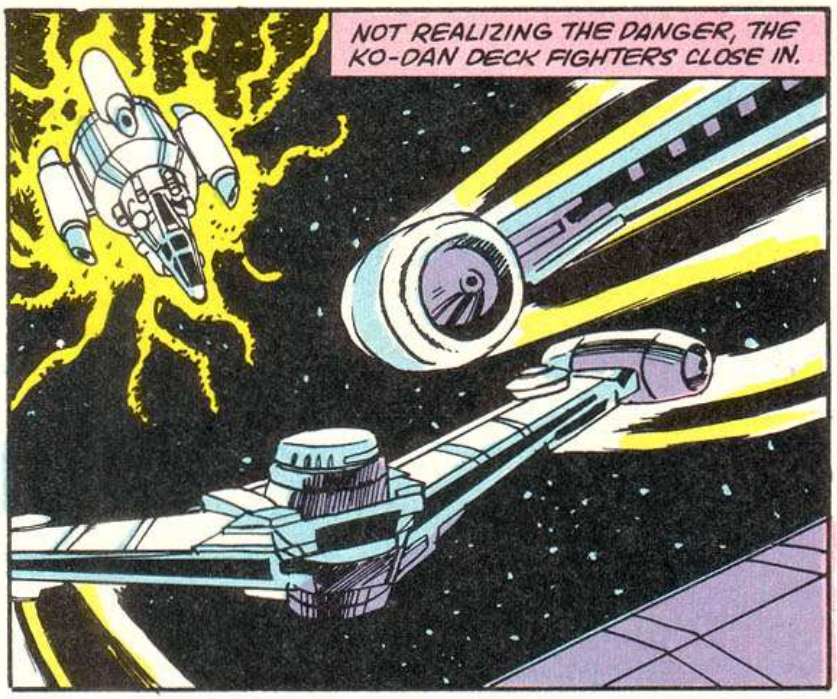
...THE MOTHER SHIP!

ALL DECK FIGHTERS... MOVE INTO KILL ZONE!

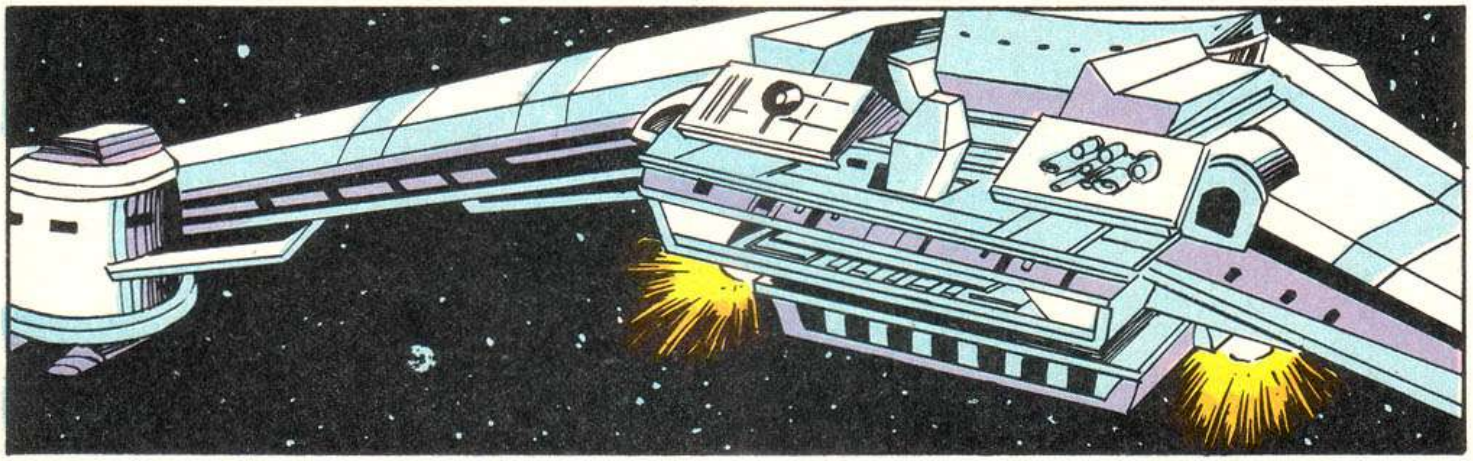
GRIG, I THINK WE GOTTA USE... DEATH BLOSSOM!
WHADDAYA MEAN, "THEORETICALLY?!"
DEATH BLOSSOM WILL THEORETICALLY GIVE YOU SIXTY SECONDS OF FULL FIRE AT CLOSE RANGE
DEATH BLOSSOM HAS NEVER BEEN BATTLE-TESTED, ALEX! IT COULD OVERLOAD OUR SYSTEMS, BLOW UP THE SHIP...

WHAT ARE YOU WORRYING ABOUT, GRIG? THEORETICALLY, WE SHOULD ALREADY BE DEAD! HERE GOES...
KLIK!


AS ALEX DIVERTS ALL OF HIS GUNSTAR'S ENERGY INTO ITS DEATH BLOSSOM MODE--
--TENDRILS OF PULSATING POWER EXTEND FROM THE SHIP LIKE THE PETALS OF SOME PERILOUS FLOWER!

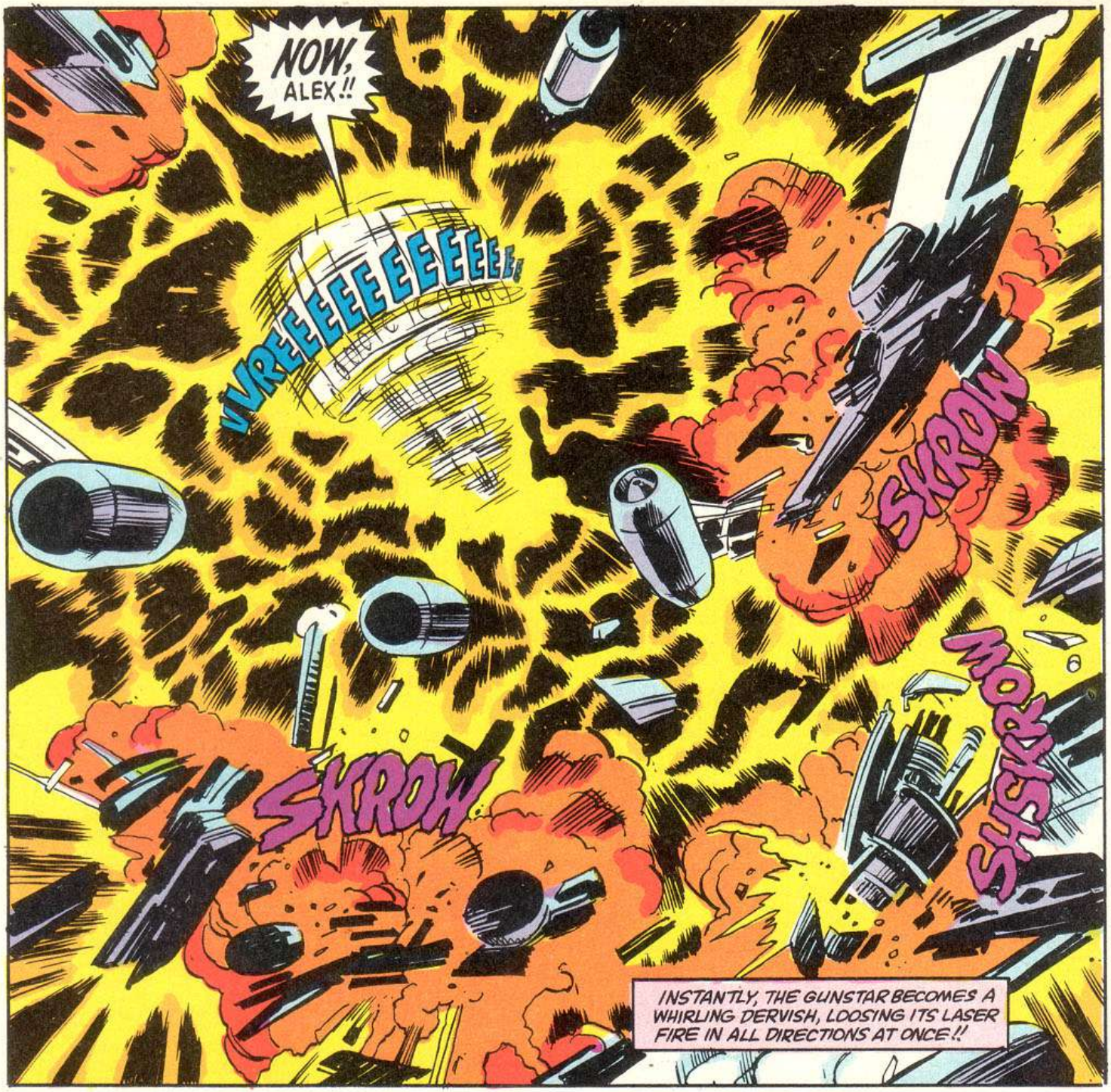

NOT REALIZING THE DANGER, THE KO-DAN DECK FIGHTERS CLOSE IN.

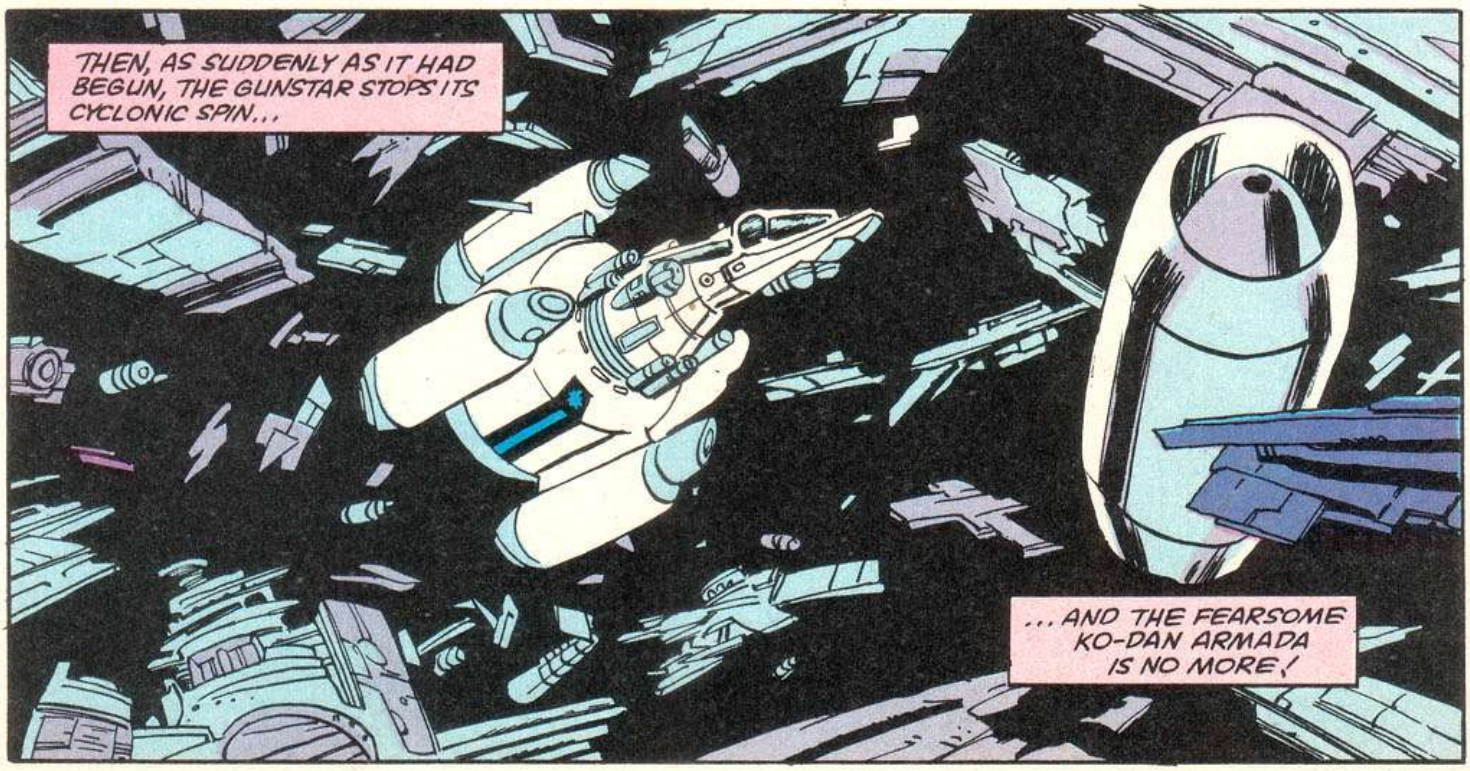
HERE THEY COME, GRIG!
EASY, ALEX! WAIT 'TIL THEY'RE IN THE DEATH BLOSSOM ZONE!



BUT, GRIG--!

EASY... EASY...


NOW, ALEX!!
VREEEEEEEEEEE
SKROW
SKROW
SKSKROW
INSTANTLY, THE GUNSTAR BECOMES A WHIRLING DERVISH, LOOSING ITS LASER FIRE IN ALL DIRECTIONS AT ONCE!!


THEN, AS SUDDENLY AS IT HAD BEGUN, THE GUNSTAR STOPS ITS CYCLONIC SPIN...
... AND THE FEARSOME KO-DAN ARMADA IS NO MORE!

WE DID IT, GRIG! WE BEAT THE KO-DAN!
YOU DID IT, STARFIGHTER! YOU DESTROYED THEIR ENTIRE INVASION ARMADA...

...EXCEPT FOR THE MOTHER SHIP!

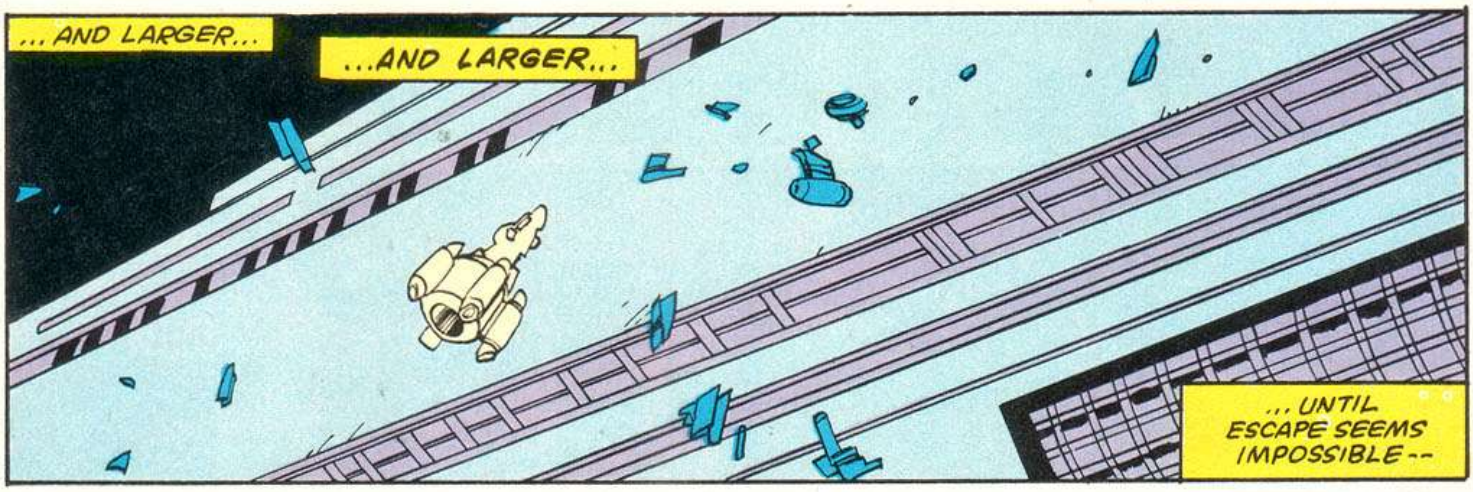
THE EMPEROR'S FLEET... GONE! DESTROYED BY ONE STARFIGHTER! WE DARE NOT RETURN LEST THIS ENEMY IS DESTROYED!
ADMIRAL KRIL, OUR GUNS ARE OUT...!
FORGET THE GUNS! RAMMING SPEED!!

GRIG, GET US OUT OF HERE!!
I'M SORRY, ALEX, BUT THE DEATH BLOSSOM DRAINED ALL OF OUR POWER!

OF COURSE, WE MIGHT DIVERT POWER FROM OUR LIFE-SUPPORT SYSTEMS--!

WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? SWITCH LIFE-SUPPORT POWER TO THE ENGINES...

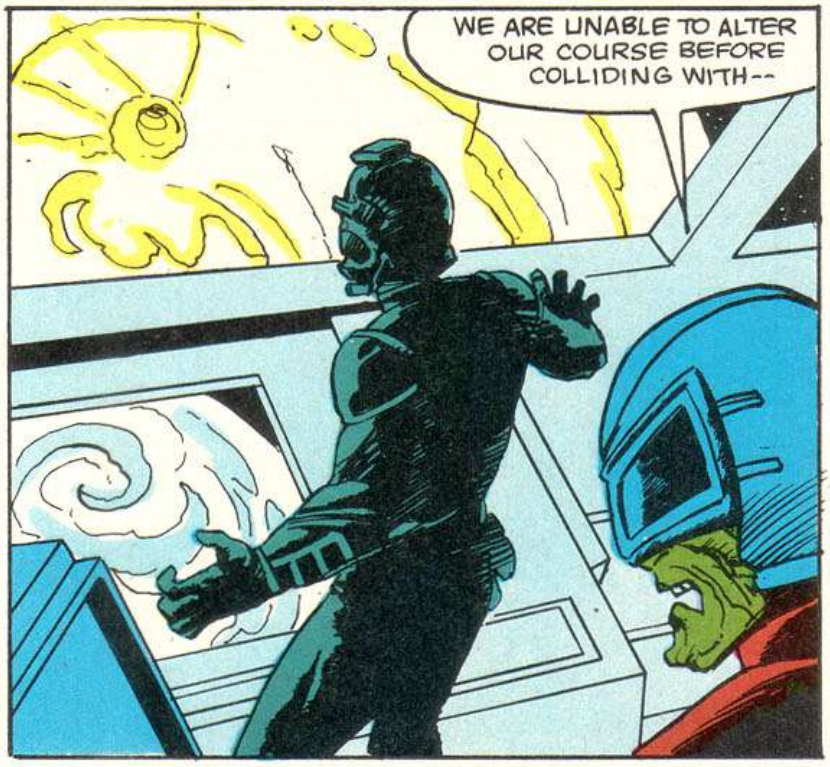
... AND HOLD YOUR BREATH!
THE KO-DAN COMMAND SHIP BEARS DOWN ON THE HELPLESS GUNSTAR! LOOMING LARGER...

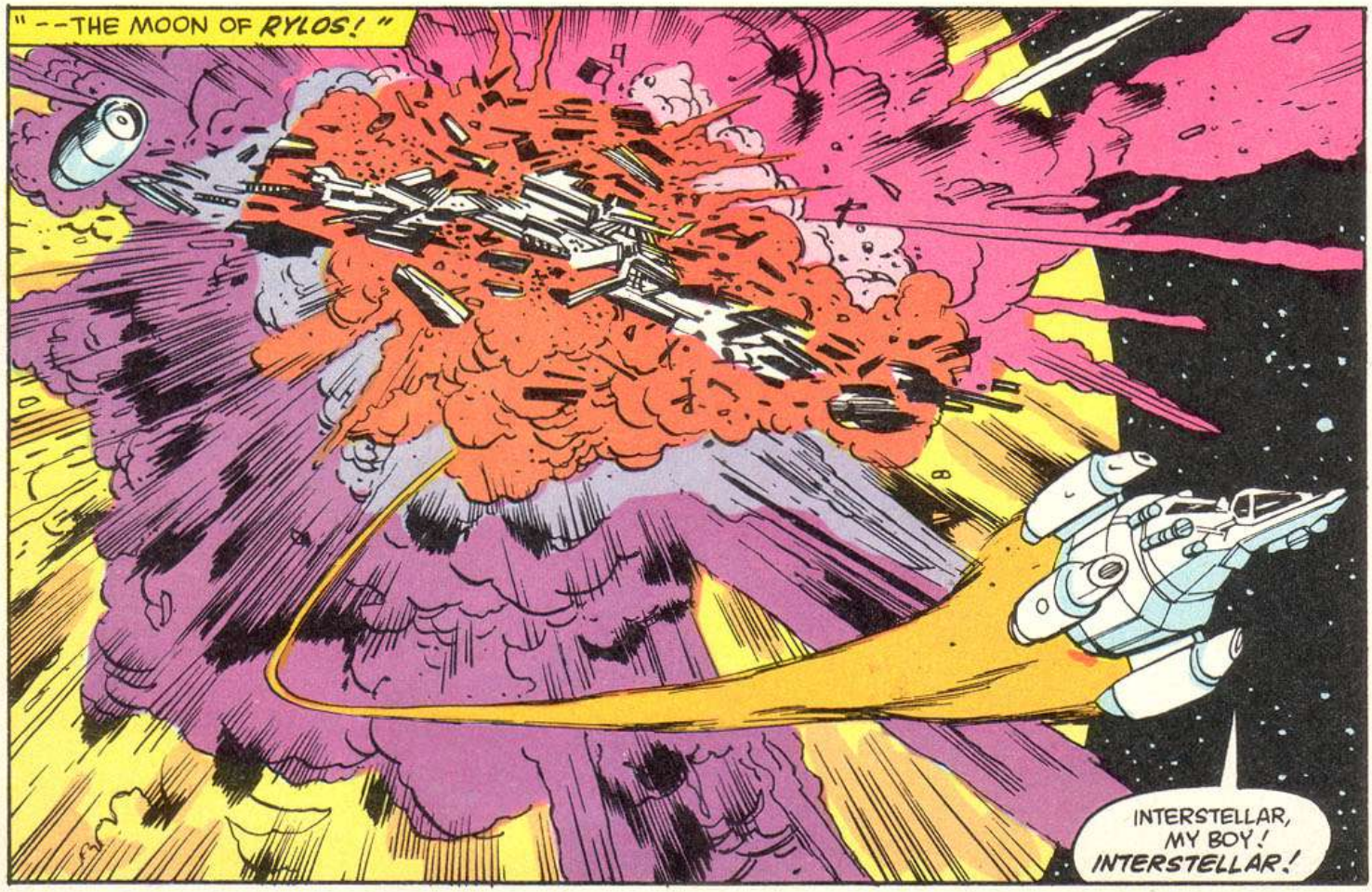

... AND LARGER...
...AND LARGER...
... UNTIL ESCAPE SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE--

--AND DESTRUCTION INEVITABLE!
GRIG?
UH... TRY HER NOW, ALEX!

VURROOM
THE GUNSTAR'S ENGINES ROAR TO LIFE, DRIVING THE RYLAN BATTLECRAFT ACROSS THE STARBOARD SIDE OF THE ONCOMING KO-DAN COMMAND SHIP!

TURN!
GO AFTER THEM!
WE CANNOT, MY ADMIRAL! THEY SHEARED OFF OUR GUIDANCE TOWER IN PASSING!

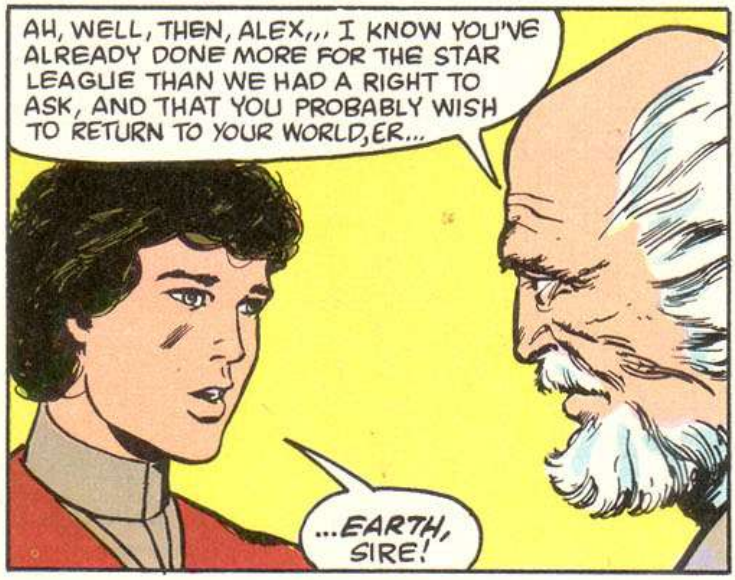

WE ARE UNABLE TO ALTER OUR COURSE BEFORE COLLIDING WITH--

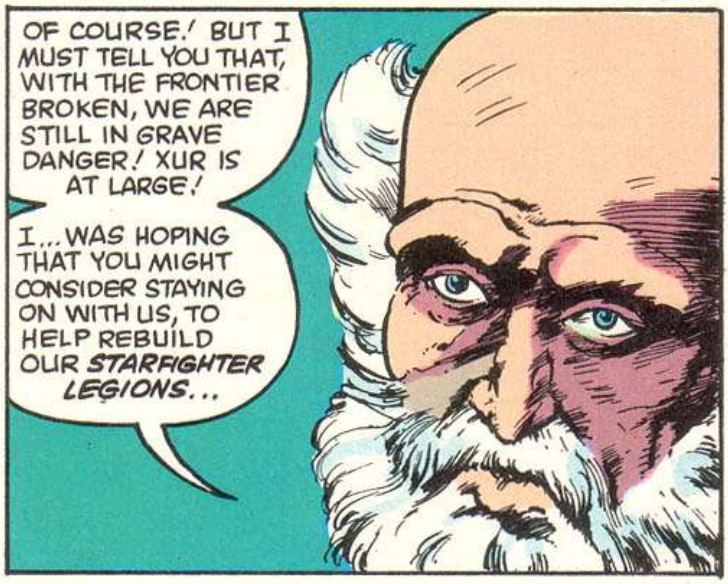

"--THE MOON OF RYLOS!"
INTERSTELLAR, MY BOY! INTERSTELLAR!

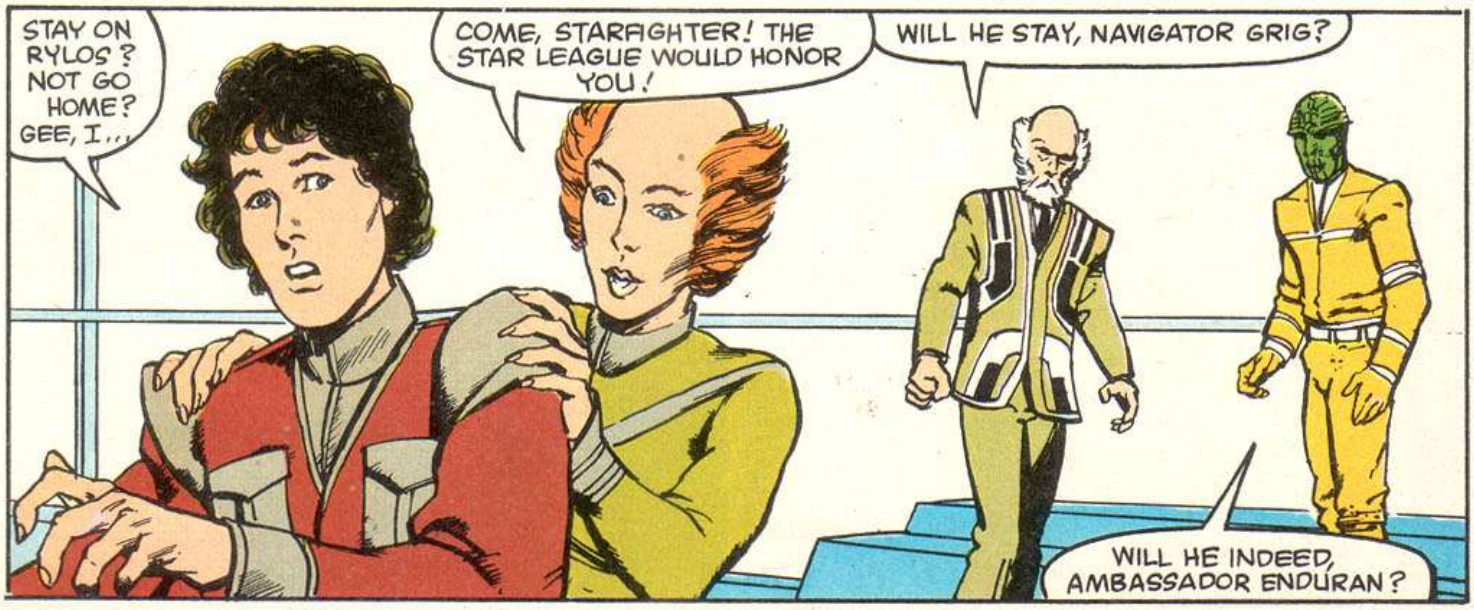
GREAT IS THE REJOICING ON THE PLANET RYLOS AS WORD OF THE INVASION'S DEFEAT SPREADS!

GEE, GRIG, I GOT A "D" IN PUBLIC SPEAKING IN HIGH SCHOOL--!
HAVE NO FEAR, ALEX! YOUR DEEDS HAVE SPOKEN FOR YOU!
INDEED, THEY HAVE, STARFIGHTER!
AMBASSADOR ENDURAN! SIRE!

IT IS I WHO SHOULD BOW TO YOU, STARFIGHTER! TELL ME, WOULD YOU OBJECT IF I CALLED YOU "ALEX"?
OH, NO, SIRE!


AH, WELL, THEN, ALEX... I KNOW YOU'VE ALREADY DONE MORE FOR THE STAR LEAGUE THAN WE HAD A RIGHT TO ASK, AND THAT YOU PROBABLY WISH TO RETURN TO YOUR WORLD, ER...
...EARTH, SIRE!


OF COURSE! BUT I MUST TELL YOU THAT, WITH THE FRONTIER BROKEN, WE ARE STILL IN GRAVE DANGER! XUR IS AT LARGE!
I... WAS HOPING THAT YOU MIGHT CONSIDER STAYING ON WITH US, TO HELP REBUILD OUR STARFIGHTER LEGIONS...


STAY ON RYLOS? NOT GO HOME? GEE, I...
COME, STARFIGHTER! THE STAR LEAGUE WOULD HONOR YOU!
WILL HE STAY, NAVIGATOR GRIG?
WILL HE INDEED, AMBASSADOR ENDURAN?

THUS IT IS THAT ALEX ROGAN, CHILD OF EARTH, IS LED FORTH TO RECEIVE THE THUNDEROUS THANKS OF THE MYRIAD WORLDS OF THE STAR LEAGUE WHO, IN MIGHTY ASSEMBLY, POUR FORTH THEIR PRAISE OF THE LAST STARFIGHTER!
I'M A HERO HERE! A SOMEBODY! MORE THAN I'D EVER BE IN THE TRAILER PARK BACK HOME!
BUT MOM'S THERE! AND LOUIS! AND MAGGIE! I'VE GOTTA GO BACK! I'VE GOTTA!

THEN, SCANNING THE CROWD, ALEX SPIES AN OLD FRIEND...
THAT'S MY BOY, ALEX!

CENTAUR!! ALIVE--!
AND, AT THAT MOMENT--THE LAST STARFIGHTER MAKES A MOMENTOUS DECISION!

EARTH.
STAR LITE STARBRITE

OH, ALEX, ARE YOU EVER COMING BACK TO ME?

SUDDENLY, AS IF IN ANSWER TO A PRAYER...
SHRRRR
THAT WIND--! WHAT'S CAUSING IT?!

WH-WHAT IS IT?!
A UFO! IT'S GOTTA BE!

SOMEBODY'S COMING OUT! IT'S... ALEX!
ALEX? MY ALEX?!

W-WHAT'S GOING ON? WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?
I'VE BEEN TO ANOTHER PLANET... HELPING THE RYLANS PROTECT THE UNIVERSE FROM BAD ALIENS!
THIS IS GRIG, EVERYBODY!

YOU SHOULD BE PROUD OF ALEX, MRS. ROGAN. YOU SHOULD ALL BE PROUD OF HIM! HE SAVED THE STAR LEAGUE AND HUNDREDS OF WORLDS! THE GREATEST STARFIGHTER EVER!

I JUST CAME BACK TO SAY GOODBYE, MOM. I HAVE TO LEAVE. THE STAR LEAGUE STILL NEEDS ME.
I... ALWAYS KNEW YOU'D LEAVE HERE, ALEX. BUT I NEVER EXPECTED ANYTHING LIKE THIS!
CAN I COME, TOO?

SORRY, SQUIRT. THERE'S ONLY ROOM FOR ME, GRIG,.. AND MAGGIE!
ME?

OF COURSE, WHY ELSE DO YOU THINK I CAME BACK? I TOLD YOU WE'D ALWAYS BE TOGETHER.
YEAH, TOGETHER HERE OR IN THE CITY... NOT IN THE STARS, ALEX!

YOU GOTTA COME WITH ME, MAGGIE. I... DON'T KNOW WHEN I'LL BE BACK. THIS IS OUR ONE BIG CHANCE!
DON'T YOU SEE? I'M NOT JUST A KID FROM A TRAILER PARK UP THERE -- I'M A STAR-FIGHTER, AND MY FRIENDS ARE COUNTING ON ME!
B-BUT WHAT ABOUT GRANNY?

GRANNY--?
BE SURE TO WRITE... OR WHATEVER THEY DO UP THERE!

OH, ALEX! TO THE FARTHEST STAR--!

AND SO, THE LAST STARFIGHTER RETURNS TO RYLOS--

-- WHILE, BACK ON EARTH...
GREETINGS, STARFIGHTER, YOU HAVE BEEN RECRUITED...
I KNOW! TO DEFEND THE STAR LEAGUE... RIGHT BESIDE MY BIG BROTHER!
THE END

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